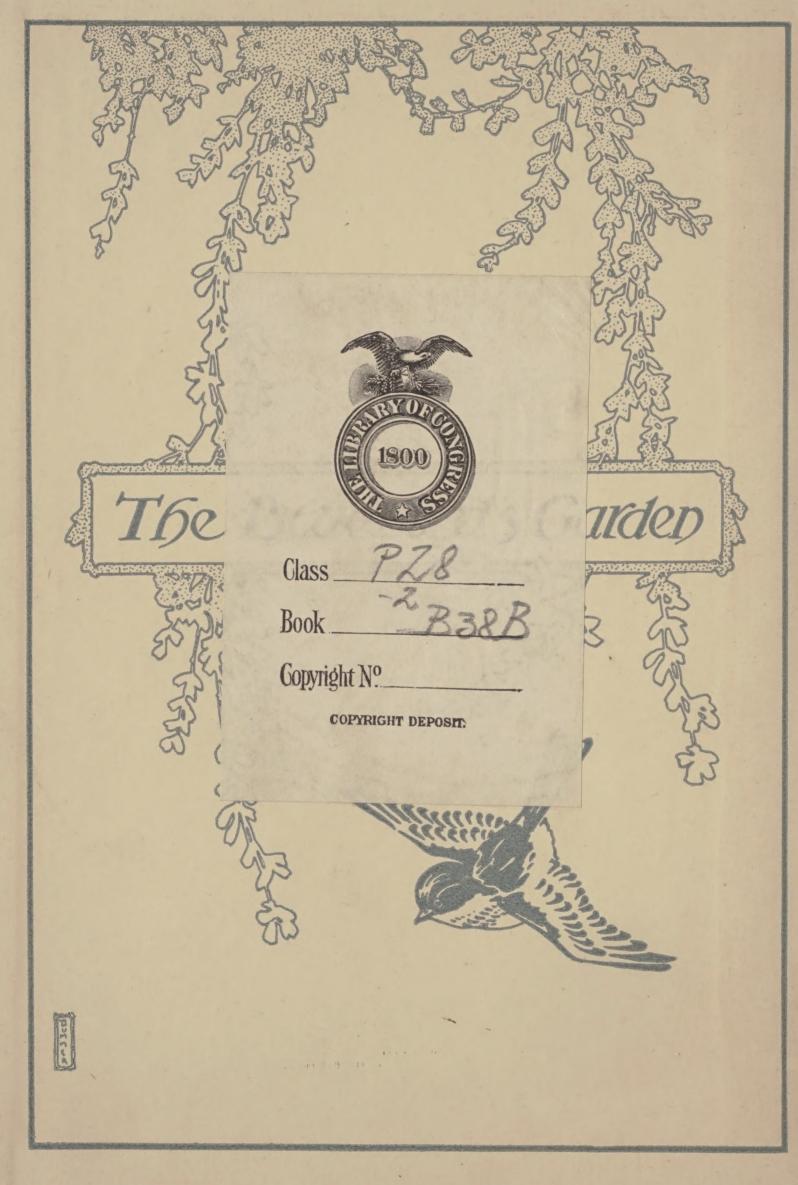
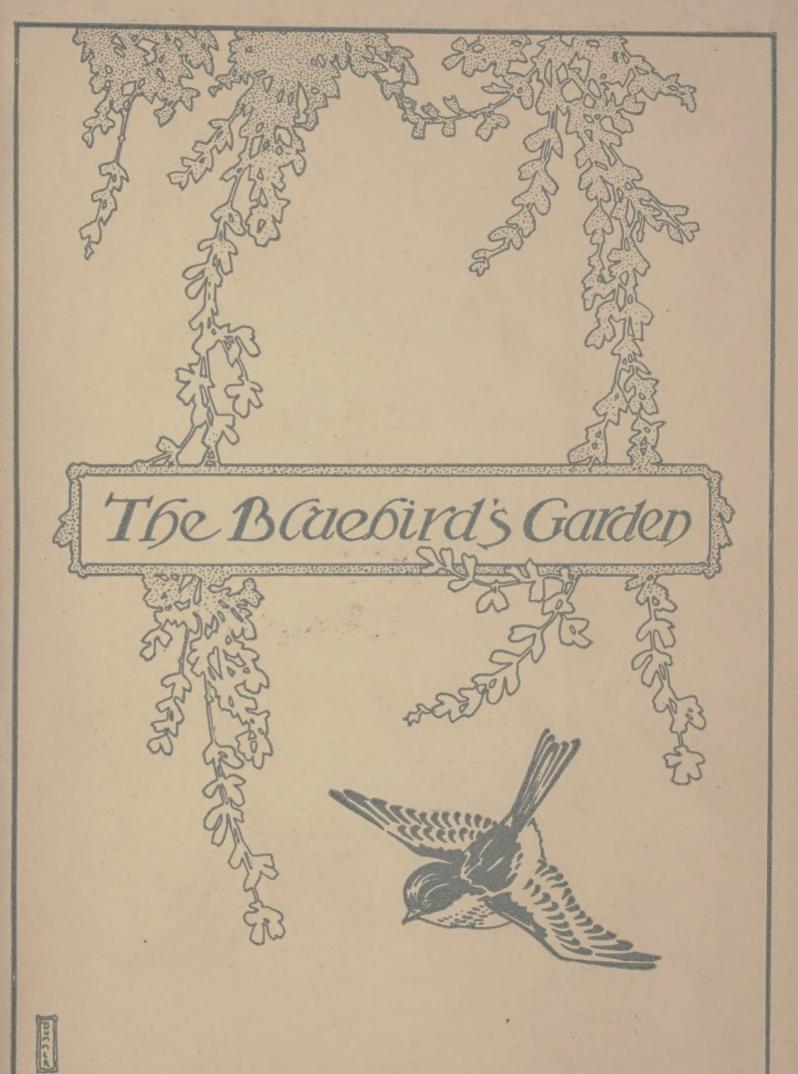
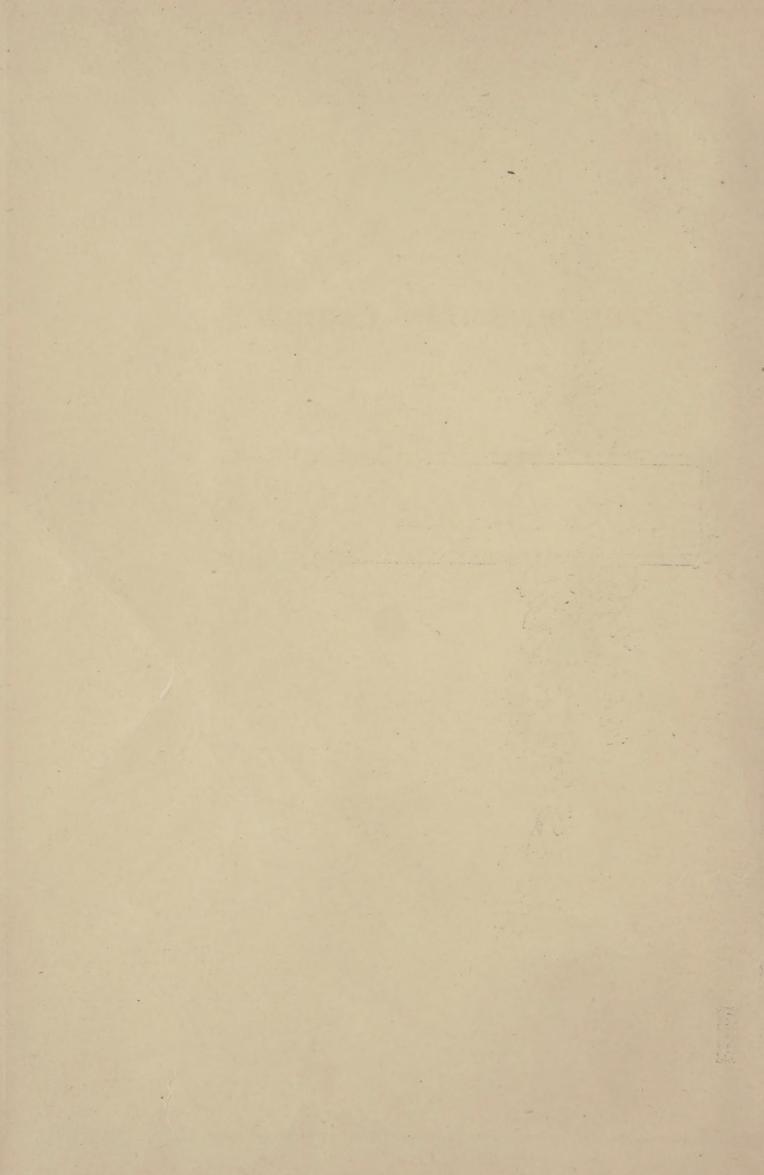
The Bluebirds



Patten Beard

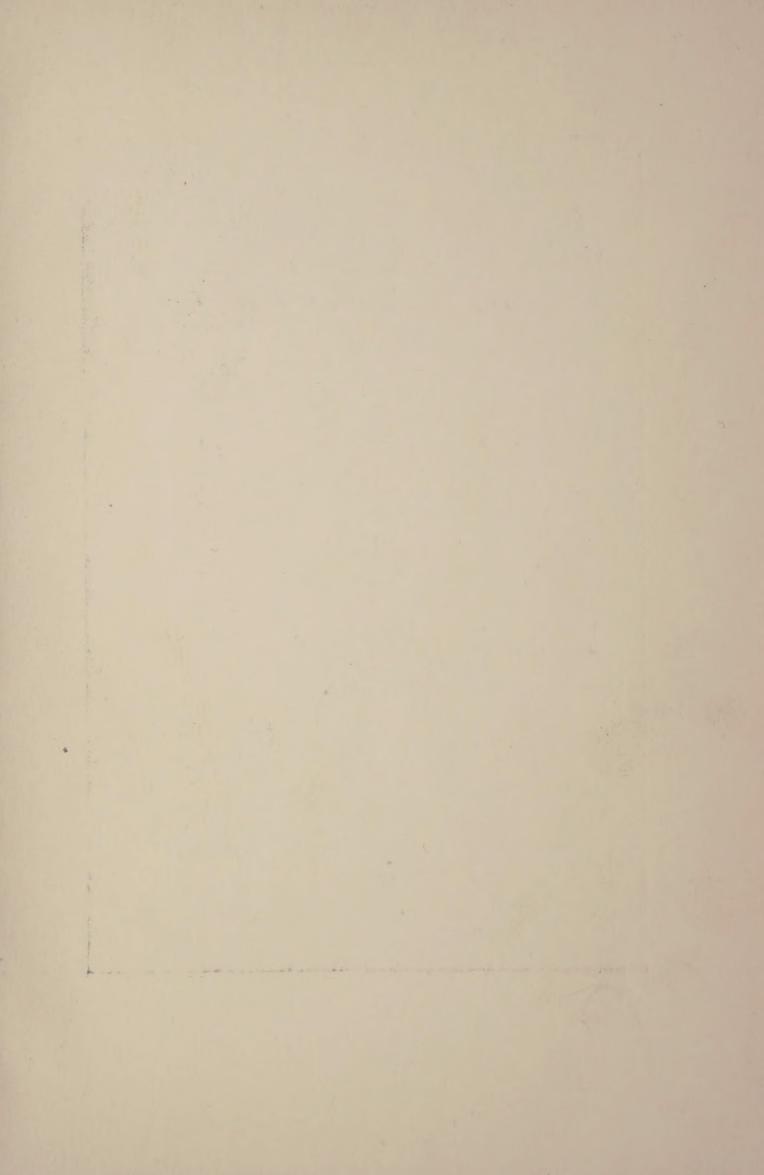






THE BLUEBIRD'S GARDEN

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"Every day, the bluebird came to sing in the Little Girl's Garden."

THE BLUEBIRD'S GARDEN

PATTEN BEARD



THE PILGRIM PRESS
BOSTON NEW YORK CHICAGO

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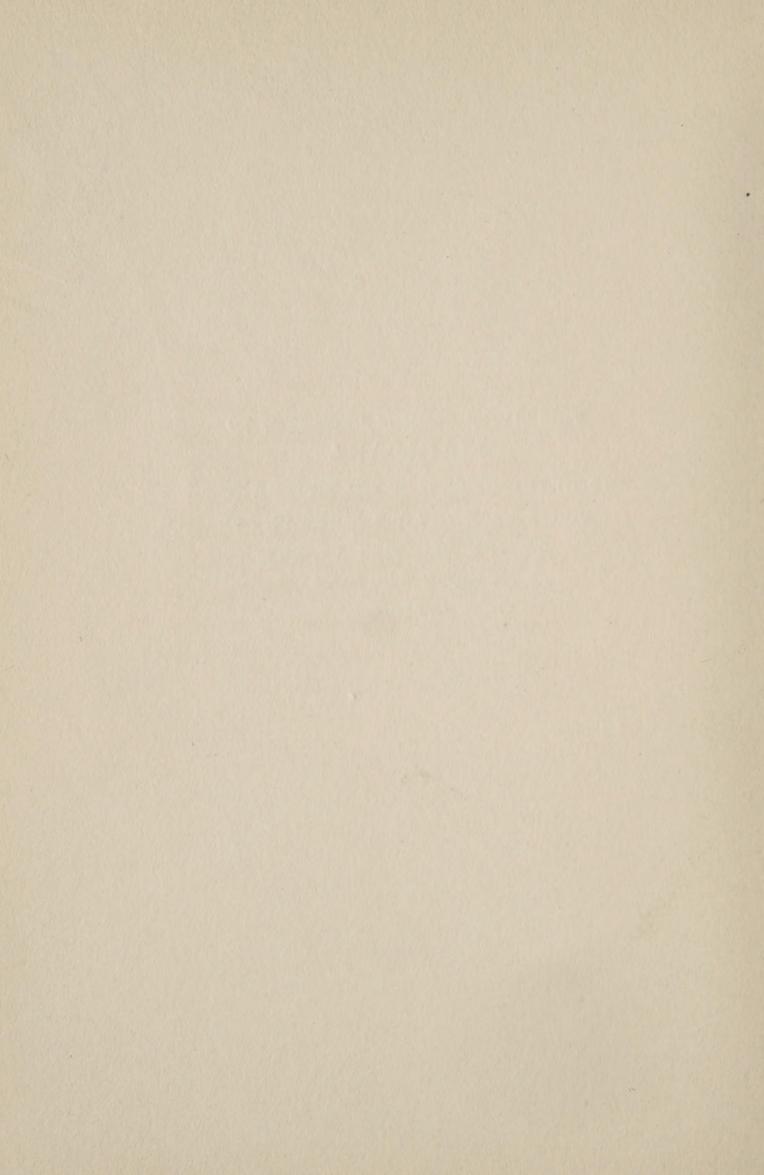
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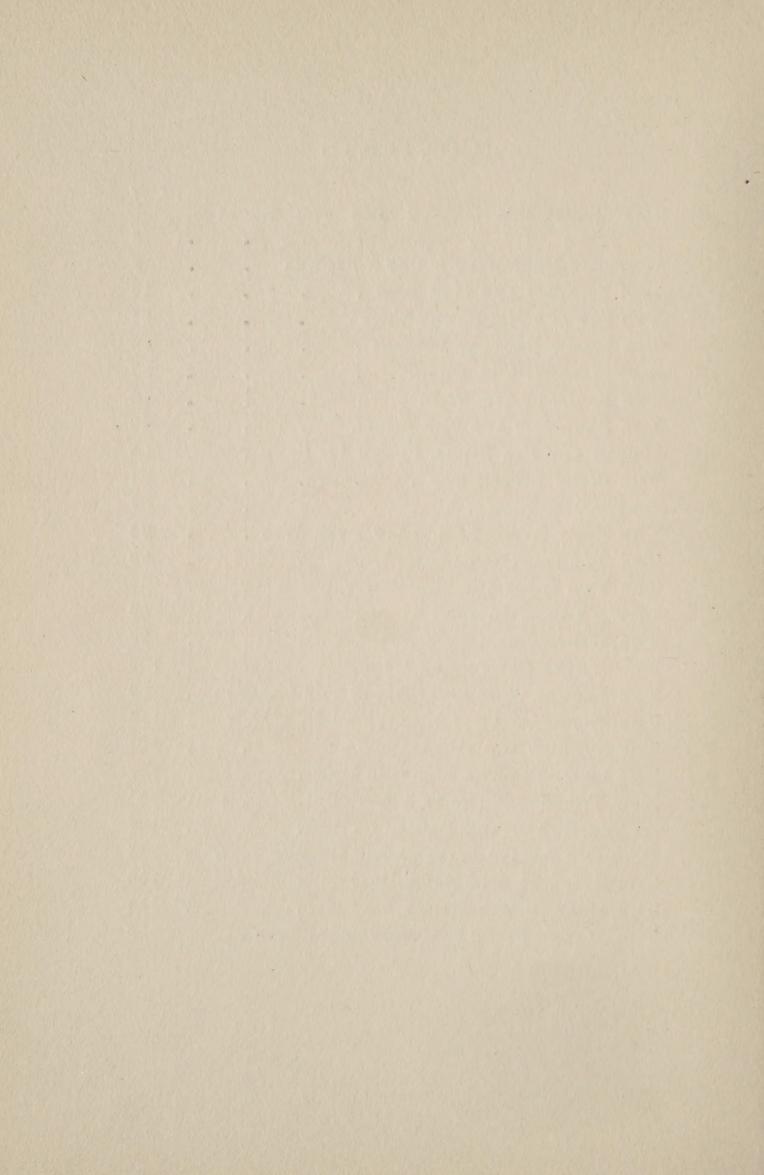


THE AUTHOR'S NOTE

MANY OF THESE LITTLE STORIES HAVE APPEARED FROM TIME TO TIME IN THE MAGAZINES. THE AUTHOR WISHES TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE KINDNESS OF THE YOUTH'S COMPANION, JOHN MARTIN'S BOOK, LITTLE FOLKS, AND THE NEW YORK TRIBUNE AND THEIR COURTESY IN PERMITTING A REPRINT OF WORK THAT WAS ORIGINALLY THEIRS.

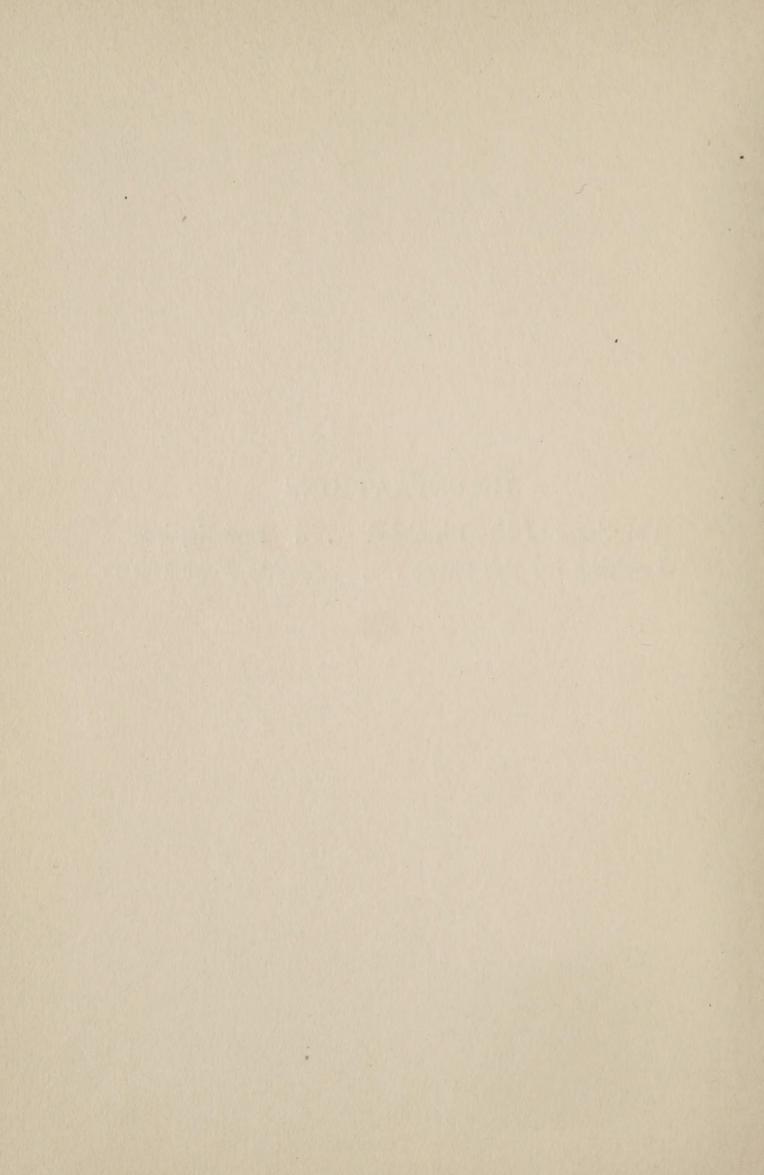
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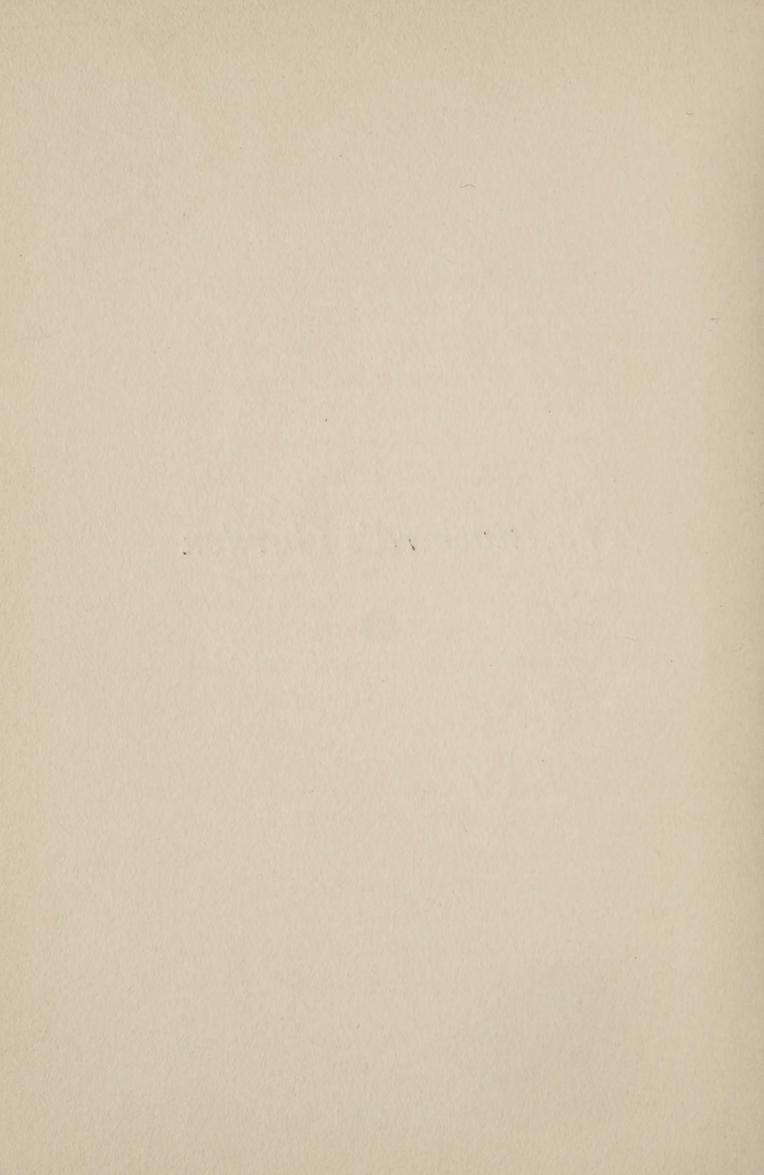


ILLUSTRATIONS

The Song of the Bluebird . . Frontispiece Looking for the Elves . . Facing Page 160



The Bluebird's Garden





The Bluebird's Garden

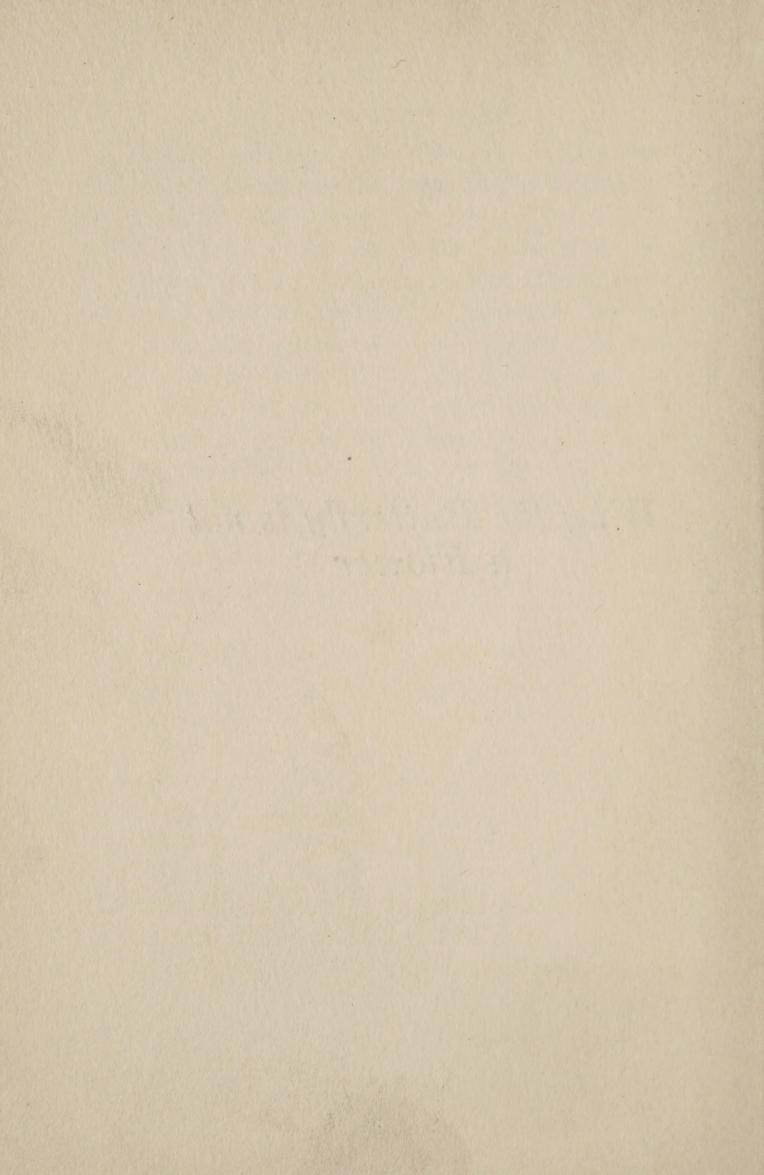
HE bluebird came to the garden every day. He swung upon the low branch of a garden shrub and sang. It was the Little Girl who pointed him out.

He came, I think, from the field where the Little Girl went to fill her pitcher at the spring. That was a short way to fly, though it was a long way to walk from the garden across the long field where Queen-Anne's-lace grew in nodding white clusters. It was a long way to go even though the walk was made gay with flitting yellow and white butterflies. But beyond the stone wall was the bluebird field where hundreds of bluebirds lived. One had only to climb over the stone wall and to sit down in the meadow beside the spring, then the whole field was alive with song and bluebirds. And I think that the bluebird who came to the garden had, no doubt, seen the Little Girl in the bluebird field and liked her. So every day he came to the garden where she

played and sang a story to her. It may have been the magic of the sunlight that helped her understand the story.

"There he is!" she said. And while the breeze swayed the leaves on the branch where he perched, we listened to the story. It was about the garden and the flowers. It was about the butterflies in the field beyond the garden. It was about the fairies and the magic of the clovers. Here is the story that the bluebird sang—it is an old, old story. Perhaps it is a legend of the garden.

Why the Butterfly is not a Flower



Why the Butterfly is not a Flower

den a little grubby brown caterpillar and all he did, from morning till night, was just to crawl about among the flowers and wish that he could be a flower, too. "I don't want to be a little grubby brown caterpillar," he insisted. "Tell me how I can change myself into a flower!"

He asked the shiny beetles—and they didn't know; he asked the curly black garden worms—and they didn't know. He asked the busy bees and Solomon Spider—but none of them knew; and when he asked the bustling wise ants, they had no patience with such wishes and so they did not tell him but turned their backs.

The hoppy-toad and the snails on the garden path—they did not know. The grass-hopper—he didn't know. The snail she didn't

know at all. So the little grubby brown caterpillar decided to ask the flowers.

He crawled up the stem of the red rose bush and asked her; but he had to crawl right down again, because she didn't know. He crawled up the stem of the tiger-lily; but he had to crawl right down again, because she didn't know. He crawled up the stem of the cinnamon pink; but he had to crawl right down again, for she didn't know, and he had to crawl right down again, after he'd been up the stem of the mignonette for she didn't know, either!

Just after he had asked the hollyhock and was going down her gray-green stem, he ran BUMP into a little teeny-weeny elfman!

"Oh, Elfman," cried the little grubby brown caterpillar, "can you tell me how I can change myself into a flower?"

And the little teeny-weeny elfman answered in a surprised and little teeny-weeny voice, "O! excuse me—no, I cannot. You'd better go to the Four-Leaf Clover Fairy. Her throne is a red clover blossom in the buttercup field. She sits there wishing wishes all the time."

So the little grubby brown caterpillar said,

"I thank you very much indeed," and he hurried as fast as all his little feet could go straight to the buttercup field to find the Four-Leaf Clover Fairy.

She was sitting on her throne wishing wishes, of course, but she stopped long enough to say, "How do you do, little grubby brown caterpillar!" And the little grubby brown caterpillar replied that he did very ill and that he wanted to change himself into a flower.

The Four-Leaf Clover Fairy said that it would not be as easy as it might seem to change him into a flower, but she offered to try. She told him he would first have to find a magic clover and bring it back to her so that she could wish his wishes with it.

So the little grubby brown caterpillar went to hunt for a four-leaf clover. He hunted—and he hunted—and he HUNTED. (You know yourself how hard it is to find a four-leaf clover when you want one, Dearest.) Well, he hunted—and he hunted till, finally, after a long while, he found one—so all was well and he carried it back to the fairy.

"Now," said she, "you must work hard and weave yourself a wishing-blanket—but I can't tell you how to do that. You will have to think

hard and work hard, and when you have made your wishing-blanket, curl up and go to sleep to dream of waking as a flower. But one thing I must caution you about—when you wake you must remember that flowers are always quiet and still. Don't move except as the flowers do when they are blown on their stems in the breeze."

And she promised to bring seven fairies with her and dance about him when the wishing-web was finished and he had gone to dream. That was the fairy spell—three times round and once more for luck. They were to dance about the little grubby brown caterpillar and wish him changed to a flower while he was dreaming.

So, it all happened as it should, Dearest: the little grubby brown caterpillar worked, and he worked—and he wished and he wished —and he made himself a warm little woven covering to lie down in and dream. (You have seen a butterfly's wishing-blanket ever so many times, though most people call it only a "cocoon.") And the fairies came to dance their spell—three times round and once more for luck. The Four-Leaf Clover Fairy called, "One, two, three, all wish together!" And all

the fairies wished that the little grubby brown caterpillar might be changed into a flower. But the funny thing about it was that they hadn't agreed beforehand just what kind of a flower to make him, so when each wished, each thought of a different kind of flower from what the other seven were thinking about. One thought of the lily that is white; one thought of the dahlia that is brown; one thought of the purple violet and another of the deep crimson poppy; one thought of the dull green mignonette and another of the black and gold coreopsis; one thought of the bright yellow buttercup, and another of the sapphire blue of the gentian, and so the wishing magic was made.

After a long while, the little grubby brown caterpillar woke up in the warmth of the morning sunlight and he found that he was a little grubby brown caterpillar no longer, for he saw that he looked like a flower—though what flower he could not tell. He felt so happy that he forgot all about the Fairy's warning and he jumped right up into the air for very joy. His petals that should have been flower petals became wings instead and he went sailing away over the meadows, lighting now and

then upon the flowers to find out which one he was most like. But he never found out, Dearest! Even to this very day, you will see the butterflies hovering over the flowers as he did. And the reason that there are so many different colors in the butterfly's wing is that the fairies forgot to agree upon one flower to make him like when they danced and wished the magic spell. This is a secret—and I'll tell you another. This is why the mischievous pansies in the garden bed always seem to be laughing. The little teeny-weeny elfman told them the joke and so they smile when the butterfly flits past. It was the fairies themselves who told me!

"It was a nice story," said the little girl, when the bluebird ended. "Will he come again?"

And I nodded. The garden was the bluebird's and he loved the Little Girl. I knew he would come again. The Princess and Her Bird

We were watching for the bluebird for we knew that he would come. He was free as the breeze and the summer air to go where he chose. And he chose to come to sing to the Little Girl, a new story full of the sunlight, and the flowers. He came on a pleasant day straight from the bluebird field to the garden where the Little Girl was playing. We had been waiting for his story and as the Little Girl lay on the grass, he perched on his little green tree and sang it to her. . . . It was the story of the Littlest Bird in All the Wide, Wide World.

III

The Princess and Her Bird

NCE upon a time there was a princess who had, as a pet, the smallest bird in all the world. She tied one end of a golden cord around the bird's leg, and fastened the other end to her wrist. At night she put the bird into a jeweled cage, the bars of which were pure gold. But the little bird was not happy, for it wished to go free among the garden flowers. "Oh, let me go!" it pleaded.

But the princess shook her head. "I love

you," she said.

"If you did love me," replied the bird, "you would wish me to be happy. I can never be

happy till I am free."

Still the princess shook her head. "You are the smallest bird in all the wide world," she said. "If I were to let you go, you would have no golden cage. Where would you find shelter and food?" "I should find the open sunlight better than a golden cage, and my food would be the sweetness of the flowers," the bird pleaded.

"Oh, little bird, you would never return to me!"

"No," said the little bird, "I should never come back, for I do not love you. You bound me with a golden cord."

Then the princess thought, "If the bird does not love me, I will not keep it against its will. I love it so much that I wish it to be happy. Perhaps, if I let it go, it will love me a little in return."

So she cut the cord and let the bird out into the wide world where the trees and flowers grow.

Then its happiness was as wide as the wind. It flitted hither and thither in the sunlight all day. Its little feathers that had been brown turned to emerald, and ruby, and amethyst, and sapphire, and topaz, for those were the colors of the flowers that it visited. But one day, as it went from flower to flower, it came upon a rose. In the heart of the rose there lay a tear that was like crystal. "The princess passed this way," said the rose. "She mourns because she is lonely without her little bird.

It has flown away. I am keeping one of her tears."

"Poor princess," said the little bird, "I am her bird! I do love her! She gave me the sunlight and the flowers. I will go back, and I will comfort her. I shall miss my freedom but I shall have her love."

So the little bird flew back to the princess. "It was your love that brought me," said the bird. "I have been happy in the sunlight and the flowers. See! Where I have dipped into the bloom of the garden all my throat has become ruby, and amethyst, and sapphire, and topaz; for the flowers are the jewels of the wide, wide world and I have found their magic."

The princess did not bind the bird with golden cord. It was ever after as free to come and go as the breeze of the garden. Both the princess and the bird were happy in each other's love.

Some day when you go into the garden, you may see the princess' bird. It is the smallest bird that there is in all the wide, wide world and the feathers about its throat are like jewels—ruby and sapphire, topaz, and amethyst. As the little bird flits from flower to flower, it

hums a song about the princess and her love, and perhaps, because of its humming song, you will call it a humming-bird.

"My little bird comes and goes," said the Little Girl when the bluebird had finished. Already the blue of his wings had melted into the blue of the sky. Only the bluebird's story was left.

"He will come again to-morrow," the Little Girl said. "He will sing another story then." And he did. The Elf and the Penny Tree

The Little Girl's black pussy-cat came to sit with us in the shadow of the little green tree next morning. She was a well-behaved pussy-cat, else the bluebird would never have ventured into the garden, I am sure. She lay in the Little Girl's lap and when the bluebird came to sing his morning story to his Little Girl, the pussy-cat snoozed on, purring. Whether she understood the story, nobody knows. It was about a penny—and, really, it is to be doubted whether a pussy-cat knows what a penny is.

This is the bluebird's morning story that he sang to his Little Girl.

The Elf and the Penny Tree

NCE upon a time there lived a little elf who was so dull that he did not know the difference between right and wrong. As he walked through a garden one day he chanced to find a bent penny on the gravel walk.

"Hello!" he cried. "I'm a penny rich now! What shall I do with my penny?" And he never thought to look about him to find out who might have lost that penny before he put it into his pocket.

He passed by a prince, a fairy, a dwarf with a long gray beard, and he passed by a little bird, a princess, a cat, and a fox, but he jogged along the garden path and patted his pocket, and never so much as mentioned that he had found a penny that did not belong to him. The prince might have been looking for it; the fairy might have been looking for it; the dwarf with the long gray beard might

have been looking for it; the little bird, or the princess, or the cat, or the fox might have been looking for the lost bent penny, but the little elf did not stop to find out. He went on his

way and patted his pocket.

"I know what I will do," he thought. "I will plant my penny deep in the earth, and let it sprout and grow up into a penny-tree. When it grows large, I shall be rich. Then I will buy me a castle and a coach, and eat nothing but chocolate creams and ice-cream all the rest of my life."

So he dug a deep hole right in the green garden lawn, and he planted the bent penny.

When the penny was safely planted, the little elf began to plan about the crop of pennies that he was to gather from his penny-tree.

"I shall need somewhere to put them," he thought, "because others might come and find them. I will dig a long tunnel in the earth all around the roots of my penny-tree. No one will be the wiser." And he began to dig.

The prince passed by while he was at work; the fairy, the dwarf with the long gray beard, the little bird, the princess, the cat, and the fox all passed by and saw the elf digging. They had none of them missed a bent penny from one of their pockets; but a bent penny is a bent penny, and they could have told the little elf that it did not belong to him, and that he ought to try to find the owner.

Now the fox, who came last, was shrewd. "Hello!" said he to the cat. "Why is that elf digging so hard?"

"Why, indeed?" asked the cat, the princess, the little bird, the dwarf with the long gray beard, and the fairy.

But the prince thought, "Why, he may be digging for treasure, and I will dig, too!" So he began to dig.

Now the elf was so busy tunneling into the ground, making a place to bury the pennies from his penny-tree, that he never once noticed that the prince was digging also. He was quite surprised when the prince suddenly threw up his cap, and shouted, "Oh, I've found a bent penny!" For the prince had been digging right over the place where the elf had planted the penny that he hoped would grow up to be a penny-tree.

"Oh," cried the fairy, "it must be my bent penny, for I have just missed one from my pocket! Who could have buried it?"

They all turned to the little elf, who was so

dull that he did not know right from wrong. "I found it on the garden walk," replied the elf, "so it belonged to me, and I did not bury it! I just planted it to let it grow up into a penny-tree. I found it. It belonged to me, didn't it?"

Then the prince, the fairy, the little dwarf with the long gray beard, the little bird, the princess, the cat, and the fox all said, "It didn't belong to you. You ought to have asked, and tried to find the owner. You ought to have asked every one!"

"Fie!" called the prince. "Fie!" called the little dwarf with the long gray beard. "Fie!" called the little bird, and the princess. "Fie!" called the cat and the fox, for they all knew better.

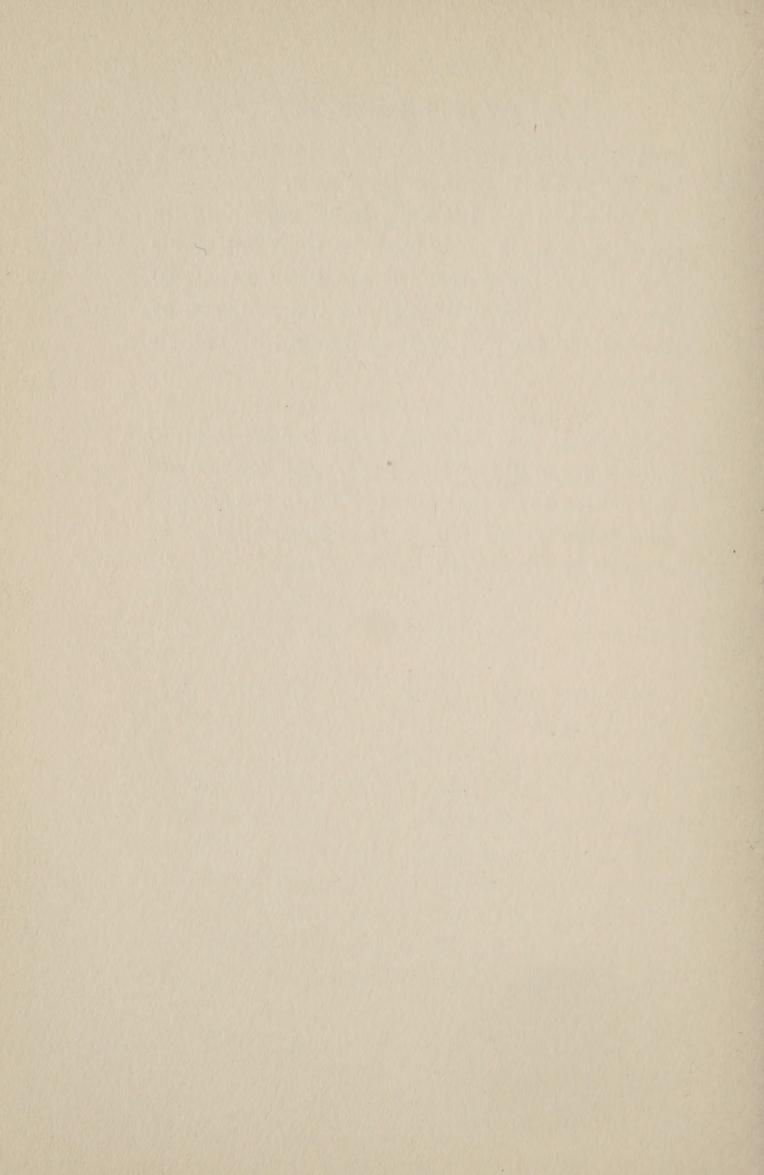
The little elf was ashamed. But the fairy, who had not said "Fie!" put her arm around the elf. "Go away," she said to the prince, and the little dwarf, and the little bird, and the princess, the cat and the fox. "Don't say any more! It was my penny and I think he didn't know right from wrong, but he does know now, and he'll never do it again."

So together they planted the bent penny again, after the prince, the dwarf with the long

gray beard, the little bird, the princess, the cat, and the fox had gone on their way.

And when the little elf found anything on the garden walk after that, he went out of his way to ask the prince, or the little dwarf, or the fairy, or the little bird, or the princess, or the cat, or the fox if they knew to whom it belonged.

When he had finished, he flirted his tail and looked down at the pussy-cat. Perhaps he did so because there was a pussy-cat in the story—who knows? "I will come again, again," he sang as he flew away.



The Three Brother Dwarfs

The pussy-cat was not there with us next morning. It was a gray morning and the sky was covered with soft white fleecy cloud. The hollyhocks bloomed bright against it, standing tall and straight in long lines of red, and white, and yellow flowers.

And about ten o'clock the bluebird came to his tree to tell a new story. Maybe the summer breeze that brushed the leaves softly—perhaps it too listened to the story, for it was very quiet, as quiet as the Little Girl who sat on the grass listening to the bluebird's story.

V

The Three Brother Dwarfs

NCE upon a time there lived three poor little dwarfs in a tumble-down house in the midst of a tumble-down garden near a dusty roadside, and each dwarf owned a china mug.

One little dwarf was stingy. He did his mug up in tissue-paper and cotton batting and kept it locked in his third bureau drawer. "I will keep it safe," said he, "where nobody can ever use it. It is my mug. My mug shall never get broken, and when I need a mug to drink from, I can use one that belongs to somebody else."

The second little dwarf was selfish. He carried his mug in his pocket. "I am going to keep this mug to drink from myself. It belongs to me. If others need a mug to drink from, let them look out for themselves."

The third little dwarf was generous. "I'm

so glad that I own a pretty mug!" he chuckled to himself. "Every one can use it. It is the very thing to offer a thirsty traveler who stops at our tumble-down house to ask for a drink of water. My brothers can use it, too. I am sure they will both be quite as careful of it as if it belonged to them. We need only the one mug, for we share and share alike, because we love one another."

Now one day there came a traveler over the dusty highway. He was thirsty and tired. He saw the well in the midst of the tumble-down garden that belonged to the tumble-down house, and he went up to the door of the house and knocked, rat-tat-tat!

The stingy little dwarf was yawning in the parlor, because he never did any work—he let the others do it. When he heard the rat-tat-tat! he kept very quiet.

The selfish little dwarf was in the dining-room, pretending to sweep—but he was only sweeping the crumbs under the mat, for he did not like to clean. He heard the rat-tat-tat! but he pretended that he was too busy to answer it.

The third little dwarf was in the kitchen, scrubbing the hearth with a mop. His sleeves

were rolled up, and he had overalls on, but he could not bear to keep a tired traveler waiting at the door. "I must go at once," he thought. And he went.

"Come right to the well," he said. "I will get a mug and give you a drink of our nice cold water. You must be tired, for the highway is warm and dusty." He set the best chair for the traveler, and gave him a fan.

He went to fetch his mug. But what do you think! When he found it at last, it was soiled—and the stingy dwarf had carelessly broken the handle off, and the selfish dwarf had dropped it on the floor and nicked the rim! "Oh! Oh! It is not fit for company use!" cried the generous little dwarf. "I must have something better!"

He asked Stingy to let him take his.

"No. You can't take mine," said Stingy. "Nobody can ever use it. It is all put away. It is mine and I won't lend it to anybody."

Then he asked Selfish to let him take his mug.

"No," said Selfish. "I can't let you take my mug. Give him yours. What do you care if that one is nicked! What do you care if the handle is off! The mug is good enough for a beggar, I should think!"

So there was nothing for the generous little dwarf to do except to take his own broken mug to the stranger. But he cut some slices of bread and put them on the prettiest plate he could find for he thought the traveler might be hungry, too.

"I'm sorry I haven't a better mug to offer you," he said, "but the others were all put away. They belong to my brothers. Oh, I wish that they could come out to see you—they are so nice,—but they said they were too busy at present. Stingy is dusting the parlor, and Selfish is brushing up the dining-room. Their mugs are nicer than mine, because they always know just how to take care of their things. Wouldn't you like some more bread? I am sorry we haven't butter to offer you—but we never buy it."

The traveler thanked Generous for all he had done. He said, "I am so grateful to you that I should like to do something for you before I go. I should like to give you something to remember me by. Let me take your mug again, little dwarf. Have you a big pail that I can use?"

"Oh, yes," returned the generous little dwarf. "I have one." He ran to the kitchen and rinsed out the one he had been using.

The stranger took the broken mug that had lost its handle and had a chipped rim, and he began to dip water from the bucket of the well into the pail.

At the first dip, the handle came back to the mug and the mug became quite whole and new again. At the second dip, the mop-pail turned to gold. At the third dip, the tumble-down house and the tumble-down garden became wonderfully fresh and splendid. At the fourth dip, the cupboards of the house where the poor little dwarfs lived became filled with pots, and kettles, and good things to eat. At the fifth dip, Stingy and Selfish came running out of the house, and they were changed! They were not stingy or selfish any longer but were like their brother, generous, and good, and loving. They carried their mugs and gave them to the stranger. And they kissed the generous little brother dwarf. The one who had been stingy said he was sorry he had never helped with the work. And the one who had been selfish said that he was sorry, too, and that he would never sweep crumbs under the

mat again—for it only made work for other people to do. And at the sixth and seventh dip of water from the well-bucket into the pail, all the water turned to gold coins!

Then the stranger bade them all good-bye, and went on his way toward his journey's end.

Who was he?—A good fairy, no doubt. He may have heard of the generous little dwarf, and wanted to help him. If that were so, he probably wanted to help Stingy and Selfish, too, and make them into Good and Happy. At any rate, they all lived happily ever after, and the mug that belonged to the generous little dwarf was kept by the well-side for all thirsty travelers to use.

"I want to be happy and good," said the Little Girl when the bluebird's story had ended for that morning. "Sometime, I will leave my china mug at the spring, when I go there for water. Perhaps a thirsty traveler will find it. And I think the bluebird would like to have it in his field, don't you?"

Slowasapoke, the Snail

When the bluebird came, next morning, we were busy watching a little black ant that was crawling along a twig. We had not forgotten the bluebird or that he was coming to tell us a story, but we were surprised to look up and see him for he had come without our knowing it. The story that he sang was about a little black ant, so perhaps he had seen what we were doing, before we saw him perched singing on his tree.



Slowasapoke, the Snail

NCE upon a time, there lived a wise ant, a clever spider, a busy bee, and a slow snail. They all lived in the same garden. The ant lived under a stone; the spider lived in a crack of the high garden wall; the bee lived in a hive; the slow snail lived in the house that he carried on his back, and he stayed on the garden path.

Now the ant, the spider, and the bee understood each other well. They shared each other's wisdom and cleverness, and they approved of the busy bee's buzzing; but they scorned the snail on the garden walk.

"What a stupid snail!" the ant used to say, proud of her own wisdom.

"What a slow creature!" the spider used to say, thinking of her own quickness.

"What a lazy snail!" the bee would buzz. "Why doesn't the snail do something? Is he going to remain forever in that one place on

the garden walk, I wonder? Some day I intend to fly wide of the garden and over the wall."

"Yes," replied the spider, "I, too, intend to seek my fortune beyond the garden wall. Fortune awaits cleverness. I, too, shall go some day."

"Yes, yes," declared the ant. "Some day I will go also. I am not like the snail who is content to live on the garden walk, inching along toward nowhere."

This each said many times when he was not occupied with his own wisdom, or cleverness, or business. And every time they had said it, if they had but noticed, the slow snail had progressed one inch farther toward the garden gate.

One day, when the ant had been more than usually wise, and the spider more than usually clever, and when the bee had buzzed more busily than ever, they each thought of Slow-asapoke, the snail, who was doing nothing either wise, or clever, or bustling.

"I think," said the wise ant, "that it must be a sorry thing to be as stupid as a snail."

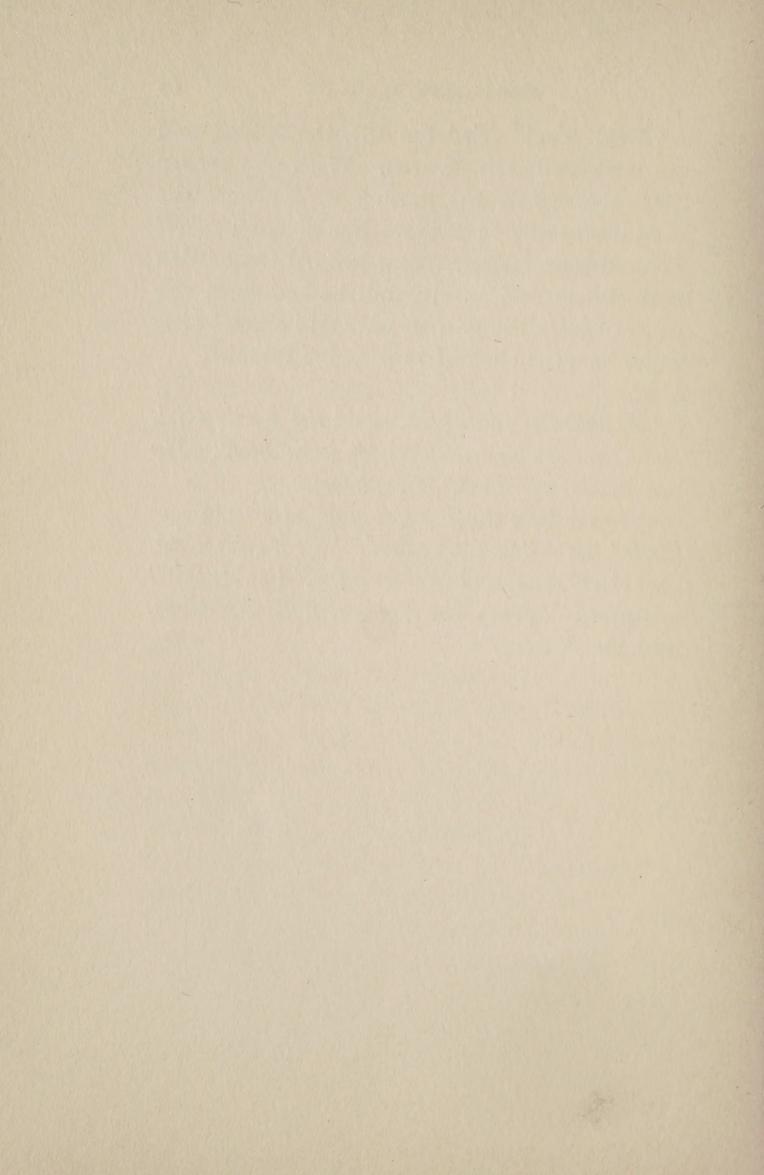
"Or as slow," put in the clever spider.

"Or as lazy," added the buzzing bee.

"Yes! Yes!" cried the ant, the spider, and the buzzing bee in chorus. With one accord they glanced at the garden walk where the snail used to be—but there was no snail there! He had been inching along toward the garden gate slowly and surely, and he had long ago passed under the garden gate and out into the wide, beautiful world to seek his fortune.

"I liked the snail best," said the Little Girl.
And the bluebird nodded his little head. He
was a wise bluebird. Yes, he was.

"And where do you get your stories, Blue-bird?" the Little Girl asked. "From the wind, and the clouds, and the sunlight," the bluebird answered—"from the fairies, and the elves, and the flowers."



The Fable of the Wish

Next time the bluebird came to his little tree, the Little Girl was busy weeding her garden. She looked up, when she heard the first notes of his song. She came to sit under the bluebird's little tree to listen. The story, this time, was all about a garden.

The Fable of the Wish

NCE upon a time there lived a child who wanted a garden. When he was out playing one day he found a clover patch and in it a four-leaved clover.

"Perhaps, now, I shall have the garden," he thought to himself. "I have found a four-leaved clover and that means good luck, so I shall wish for a garden to grow right here in place of the clover patch."

But days and days passed by and no garden sprang up. Nothing bloomed but the red and white clover.

"I might be more lucky," the little boy considered, "if I had more four-leaved clovers." Yet when he searched, all he could find was one tiny clover leaf and it had five petals. When he picked it, he discovered a wee, little gray man hiding under it.

"Hello!" exclaimed the wee, gray man,

"Hello! Do you understand the clover

language?"

"Why, yes," returned the little boy. "Four-leaved clovers mean good luck and five-leaved clovers mean bad luck."

"Oh!" declared the wee, gray man, "You don't understand at all, I see! They certainly told you something more!"

"First they told me I'd be lucky and I supposed that that meant my wish would come true—but it didn't. And now I understand why. I just found a five-leaf clover that brings ill luck."

"No. You don't understand," the wee, gray man insisted. "The first clover leaf meant good fortune, but the second was to show you that no amount of wishing on four-leaved clovers could make your wish come true. If you want anything very, very badly, you must work for it. What do you want?"

"A garden," the little boy replied.

"Have you dug the earth?" questioned the wee, gray man.

"No."

"Have you planted seed and cared for the tender young plants?"

"No."

"Then how can you expect that Luck will give you a garden, or that your wish will come true?"

The little boy hung his head. "I hadn't thought about that. I will go and dig the earth of the clover patch right away," he said.

So he dug the earth, and he planted the seeds, and he tended his little garden. Sometimes he worked very hard all day over it for it needed much care. He weeded and he watered and watched every tiny bud and flower till by and by, after a long, long while, the place that had been a clover patch was the very garden that the little boy had wished to have.

"Hurrah!" he sang while he lived amongst the bloom and the blossoming of all its sweetness, "I have my wish at last! How lucky I am!"

Then beside him, he saw the wee, wee gray man dancing up and down upon the garden walk.

"You helped me long ago. If it hadn't been for you, I should have been wishing for my garden still. I should never have known how to make it."

The wee, gray man smiled. "My name is Pluck," he answered. "Some people persist in calling me Luck but there really is no such person as Luck anywhere. I am the fairy they mean. I am the fairy of all green clover leaves and their wishes. And remember this: Wishing alone is worth nothing. You must work for what you desire. Only Pluck can tell you how to go about to make the wish come true."

"That's why I was weeding," the Little Girl said, when the bluebird had finished. "I want to have a garden. There shall be pansies in mine, and bluebells—and there shall be no weeds."

I think the bluebird heard what the little girl said for he looked as if he had. But he flew away after the story, and the Little Girl went back to work at her garden.

The Sand-Box and the Shell

Next time the bluebird came in the morning, the Little Girl was playing in the sunlight in the sand-box. There was fine white sand from the shore in the sand-box. There were shells there, too. Perhaps it was the largest pink shell that made the bluebird think of his story—maybe—who knows. He never told the Little Girl at all.

VIII

The Sand-Box and the Shell

NCE upon a time, there was a children's sand-box that lay beneath the shade of green trees in a sunny garden. Every day, when it was pleasant, the children came to play with its sand. They built tall castles and they made many wonderful things but it was never quite so fine as digging in a real beach where sands run down to meet the incoming ripples and stretch wide welcoming arms to meet the water. The children missed the blue ocean and, had they but known it, the sand-box, also, missed the ocean.

All day long while the children built castles the sand-box dreamed of the sea. It was a long, long time since its sand had come from the shore. It remembered how the dim horizon looked at sunrise and how there was a silver path to the shore when the moon shone. It remembered how the seaweed washed up with the tide and how beautiful the shells and pebbles were. There were no shells in the chil-

dren's sand-box and the pebbles that lay on the garden walk had not the magic of turning into precious stones—red, and white, and pink, and green, and golden for they had no blue sea to change them into jewels.

One day when the children came to their sand-box, a wonderful thing happened: they brought with them a shell—a shell that was storm-carved, shaped like the swirl of a great sea wave. Its inside was tinted with the seven magic shades of wonder. It was like opal, fiery yet full of vague cloud colors. All the mystery of shifting tides was in the shell and all the dear dreams of wide ocean silences.

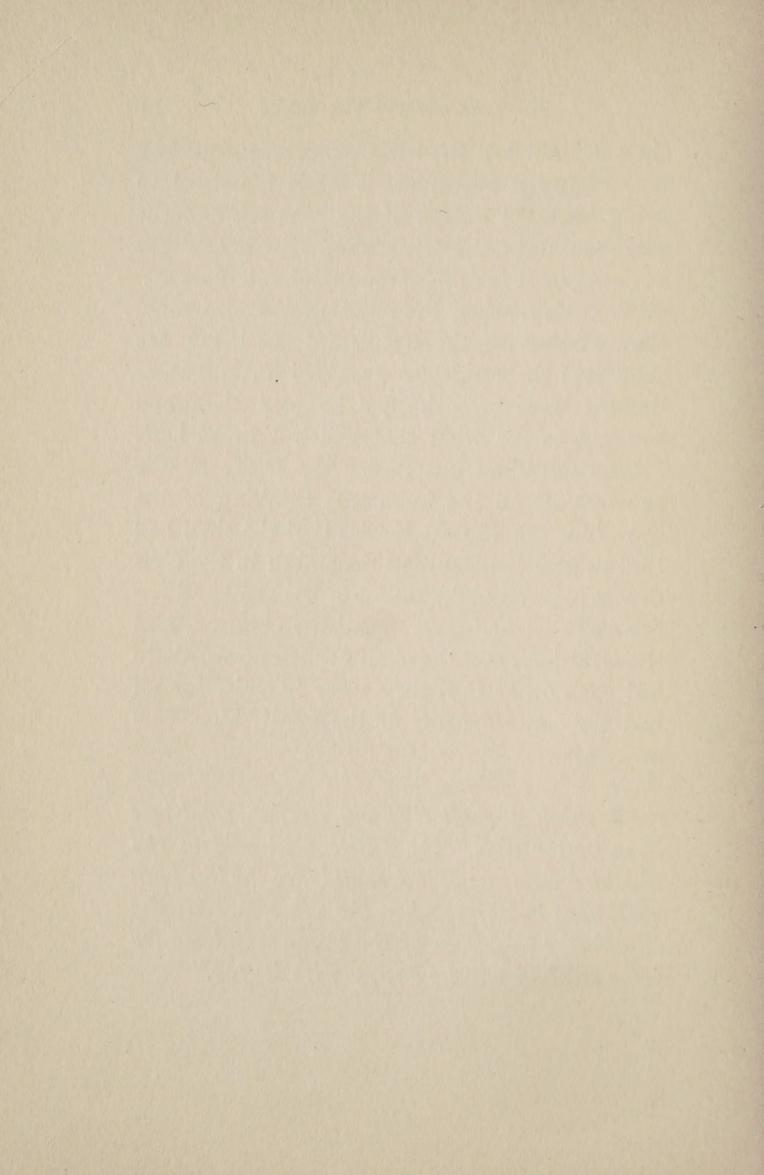
Now, the shell was very lonely, too, and it longed for the blue sea just as the little children's sand-box longed also. While the children played their games, the shell lay on the warm yellow sand and thought of the long beautiful beach that was its home—and the little children's sand-box gazed at the shell and as it gazed it heard the roar of the breakers that washed the shells before them up on the beach long, long ago!

At evening, the children ran off and left the shell lying in the sand. Then the shell and the sand had a quiet talk together—yet the shell did not tell the little children's sand-box how happy it had made it when it helped to bring back the dream of the blue sea and the sand-box did not tell the shell how it brought the song of the ocean's wonderful call closer.

Next day, when the children came to play, they carried off the wonderful shell, but the shell and the sand-box dreamed on and their dreams were very happy because each had brought to the other that which it loved best.

The sand-box out under the shade of the green trees on the lawn was thinking of the blue, blue sea and the stories that the shell had told it, and the shell lay dreaming in the children's playroom, dreaming of the sand and the far away silent beach. And the children, and the sand-box, and the shell needed no words to tell each other that they were friends, for all had the same dreams of the great, blue, faraway sea.

"I think I shall like my garden sand-box even better now," the Little Girl said as the bluebird flew away. "I shall leave the big pink shell here to-night, when the sun sets. Maybe it will like to dream of the ocean—and maybe the sand-box will be happy with it, too."



Where the Sea Shell Found Its Song

The pink sea shell was lying on the sand when the bluebird came at his appointed time next day. He saw the shell. Perhaps that was why he chose to tell another story about the sand and the sea. It may have been the wind that told him—the wind blew over the bluebird field from where the bluebird came. Beyond, far, far away, one could see the blue line of the water and the white sails of little boats. So, perhaps the wind told the bluebird the story when he was still a little bird.

Where the Sea Shell Found Its Song

AVE you ever run upon the sea beach where the sand is warm golden yellow like the sunlight and where pebbles lie along the shore at the water's edge for the blue waves to change into jewels? Have you ever picked up a pink shell and held it close to your ear to hear the song of the sea that is in it? If you have, you will like to know where the sea shell found that song.

A long, long time ago, when the first wet blue waves broke into curling feathers of white spray at the edge of the cliffs and rocks, they made the sand and the pebbles. The great deep sea came back and forth each day to work and play with them. It changed the cliffs to powdery sand and the rocks it cut into many-colored pebbles. It hung garlands of sea-moss upon the stones and it touched the stones at the water's edge to make each one magic with a

luster that changed them to rubies, and emeralds, sapphires, and topaz.

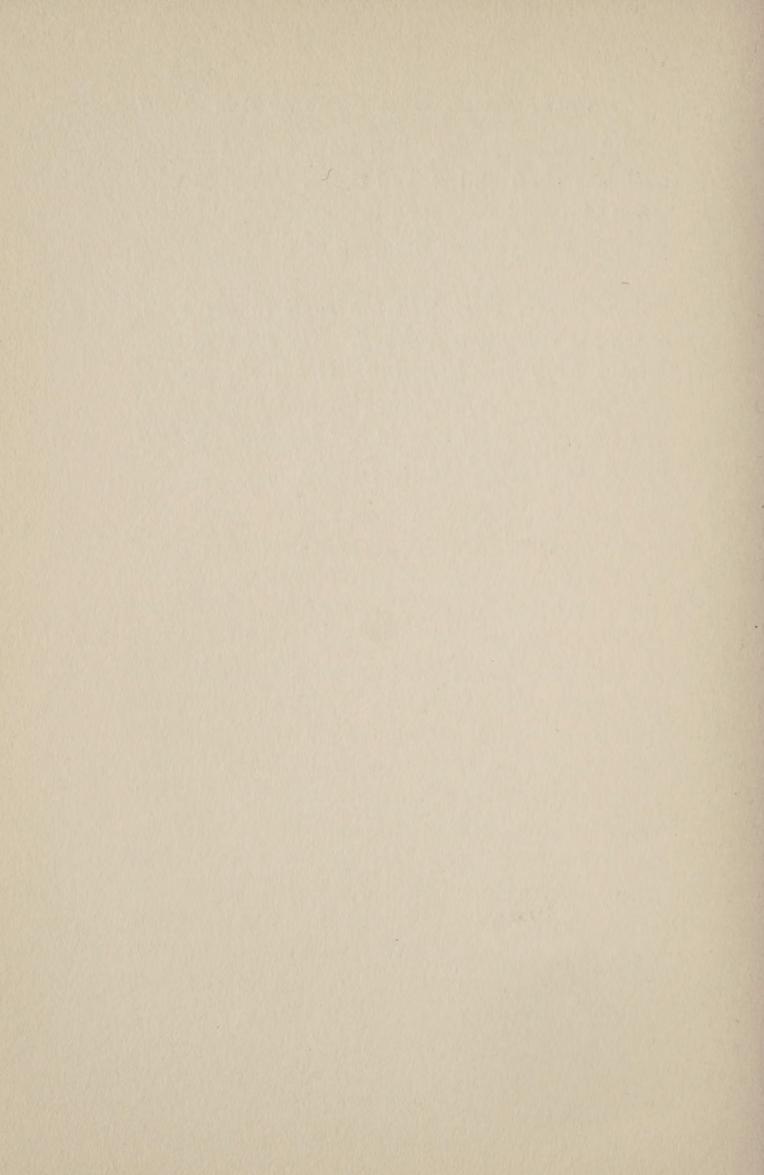
Tiny crabs came to live in the rocks and star-fish sunned themselves on the sand as the tide came in. It was then that the sea-fairies came to live in the shells.

Each chose its own tiny home. Some lived in pink shells and some lived in yellow ones. And the sea fairies were very, very happy—so happy that they always sang to themselves in their own little homes that were shells. The songs were about the blue sea and its feathery white-capped waves; they were about the mist and the spray about the cliffs; they were about the boom of the surf and the swish of the tide on long level sea-beaches. They were about the sea-birds and the gardens of sea-weed. They were about the deep sea where it melts into the wide blue sky at the horizon. All the songs found an echo in the waves that broke upon the sands and the rocks.

And after the sea fairies had lived in their little homes, happy and singing, they went back to the deep sea again. Where they went, nobody knew. Since that time, there have been no sea fairies. They went back to the wide blue ocean.

But the songs they had sung echoed within each sea shell and stayed there. That is why when you hold a sea shell to your ear and listen, you can always hear the song of the sea.

The Little Girl held the shell to her ears, when the story was finished. She sat that way a long, long time listening. When she started from her reverie the bluebird had flown away but the pink shell was in her lap and she had heard the song of the sea fairies.



The Silly Little Elf

"I want a funny story to-day," laughed the Little Girl. "I shall ask the bluebird for one!

Do you suppose he will come?"

And he did—exactly at this moment. He found the Little Girl still smiling and he began his story at once. It was all about a silly little elf, his spoon and his penny.

The Silly Little Elf.

NCE upon a time, there lived a silly little elf who owned a silver coin, a spoon, and a penny. With these to help him he set out into the world toward fortune.

He had not gone very far when he met a black beetle scurrying lickety-split along the path.

"Hello," exclaimed the elf, "where are you

going?"

"Up and down, over the earth," replied the beetle. "I will take you with me on my back, if you will pay me for the ride."

So the elf gave the beetle his silver coin and rode upon the beetle's back while he scurried along lickety-split. But they hadn't traveled far, when the beetle bumped into a stone and sent the silly elf sprawling upon his back in the dust. The beetle himself lay with his heels kicking in the air and he would not get up or

go on till the silly little elf tugged him to his feet. Then he said, "I can't carry you any farther, unless you pay me something more!"

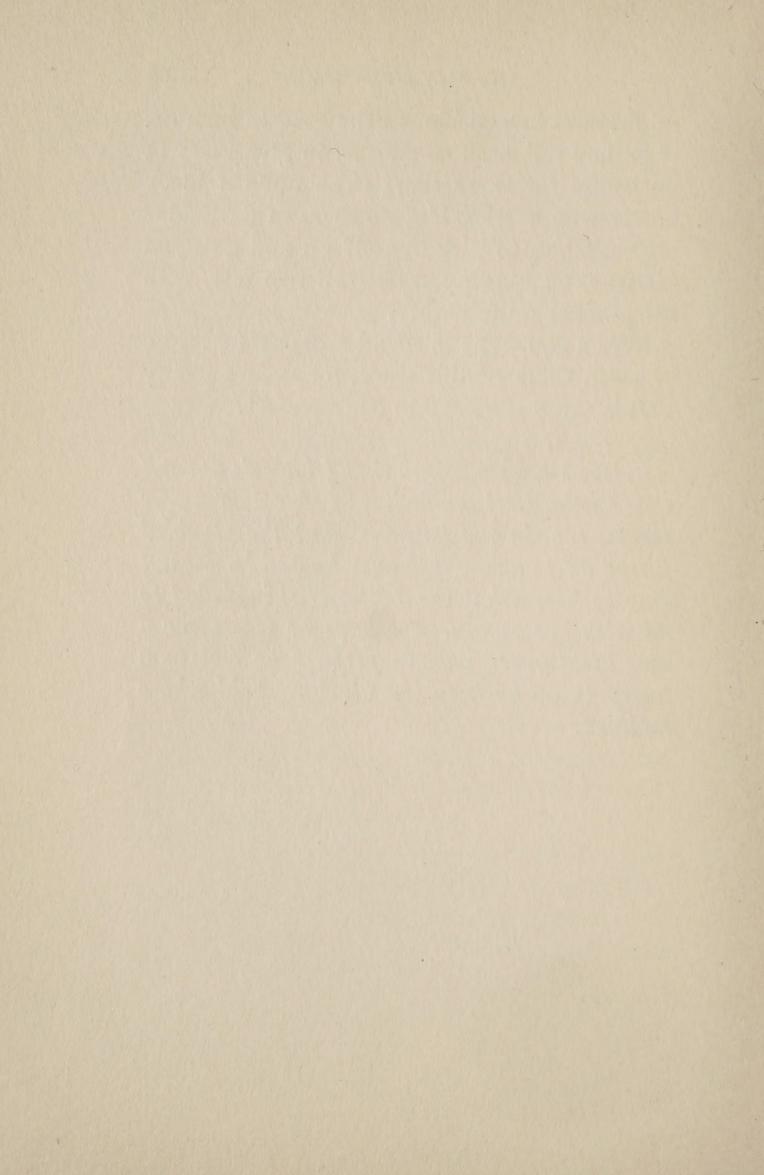
So the elf gave the beetle his spoon and rode upon his back while he scurried along lickety-split. But they had not traveled very far when the beetle bumped into a tree-trunk and sent the silly little elf sprawling on his back in the dirt. The beetle himself lay with his heels kicking in the air and he would not get up or go on till the silly little elf tugged him to his feet. Then, he said, "I won't carry you any farther, unless you pay me something more!"

And the silly little elf, who had only a penny left, gave the beetle the penny and rode upon the beetle's back while he scurried along lickety-split. BUT, they hadn't gone very far, when the beetle bumped into a fallen log and sent the silly little elf sprawling upon his back in the midst of the dried leaves and the beetle himself lay with his heels kicking in the air and refused to go on, even after he had been tugged to his feet.

The elf had no more to pay him and he was a long way from having found his fortune. He had parted with his silver coin, his spoon, and his penny, and who knows how these might have helped him on the road to fortune, if he had not been so silly as to give them in exchange for three short rides upon a black beetle who carried him nowhere in particular and left him to pick himself up and go upon his way, walking upon his own two feet, with his pockets quite empty.

When you want to spend a penny foolishly, you can think of this story, for even a penny that is saved is money in one's pocket.

"And I have a penny that I haven't spent," the Little Girl smiled. "I have a silver spoon, too, in the house—" but the bluebird flitted off to a rosebush near-by and he did not stay to hear what the Little Girl intended to do with her penny. Perhaps he was after a nice little green worm—perhaps he was in a hurry to go back to the bluebird field where he lived.



Little Mr. Inch

It was a short story that the bluebird told the Little Girl next day. He came to the garden late in the forenoon, after the usual time. What kept him, we did not know. The Little Girl was under the tree anxiously waiting, when he came. And the story he told was about Little Mr. Inch. We had seen somebody who looked like him. Perhaps—well, perhaps it was his brother. The bluebird never told us whether it was or no.

Little Mr. Inch

NCE upon a time there lived a little green inchworm. He lived in a flower bud that grew on a flower stem in a garden bed. All day long he went about measuring things. From pink-gold sunrise to purple-gold sunset little Mr. Inch went about among the flower stalks and the green leaves measuring everything. He measured everything by himself.

Now, as you know, there are many ways of measuring things in this sunny big world; an inch is one measurement and a mile is another; but for little Mr. Inch there was only one measurement—himself. He would crawl out long, and then he would crawl up short, and so he would measure everything that was to be measured.

Things never came out even. They never fitted the exact size of little Mr. Inch.

"Everything is wrong!" declared little Mr. Inch. "There is nothing that measures right.

Everything, everything is wrong!"

He had just come to the edge of a great, green leaf that he had been measuring, and as he stood up and looked about to see where he should go next, he saw a fuzzy-wuzzy cheerful caterpillar coming along the branch.

"Nice day!" said the fuzzy caterpillar.

"Bad day!" returned little Mr. Inch. "Everything is wrong. There is nothing that measures right! There is nothing that fits my size."

Indeed, now that the inchworm felt that some one was listening, he made a great fuss. "Nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing is right!" he declared.

He made such a fuss that a little bird sitting on a twig near by immediately saw him; he caught little Mr. Inch in his bill and bore him away.

But the fuzzy-wuzzy, cheerful caterpillar turned and curled himself up on the great green leaf in the sunshine of the garden; he was larger than little Mr. Inch, but somehow and somewhere he had learned never to measure things by himself, and so he was happy in the garden, sunning himself on the great green leaf.

"And was the caterpillar the one that changed into a butterfly?" asked the Little Girl.

"Perhaps," replied the bluebird. "The world is full of other little inch worms and other cheerful caterpillars."

"I think I'll go look for some," said the Little Girl and presently she had found a nice cheerful caterpillar crawling along the gardenbed not far from where the Johnnie-jump-ups were in the border. She was watching him when the bluebird flew down from his perch on the little tree and winged his silent way out of his garden.

The First April Fool that Ever Was

The sun had been shining and hiding behind the clouds all the morning in turns, when the Little Girl put on her rubbers and came out to play in the garden. She was wondering whether it would rain or no—whether the bluebird would come to tell his story if it showered. But he came—he came! And the rain held off—and the sun did shine for a little while. It shone all the time that the bluebird sang and the story was all about the sun's April fooling.



The First April Fool that Ever Was

ID you ever hear about the first April fool joke that the world ever knew? I dare say you have not, unless the sun himself told you. He was the one who made it, you know.

He had been thinking about it for a long time, just as you and I plan out our April fool jokes. When the morning of April first came he hid behind the clouds and watched to see what would happen, just as you and I hide to see how our jokes will turn out.

Of course the sky was all dark without him. It was a gray morning and the clouds in the east looked like rain. Indeed, it was so dismal that all the little elves and the fairies who lived in fields and garden places looked up at the sky before starting off to school.

"Shall we take our umbrellas?" they asked of the fairy godmothers.

"Certainly, certainly!" all the fairy godmothers answered, "and be sure to put on your overshoes, too! It is going to rain to-day. The sun is quite hidden."

So all the little elves and the fairies scampered about hunting for their toadstool umbrellas and their cherry-petal goloshes. When they had found them, they ran off quite fast over the meadows toward the Goblin School. The toadstool umbrellas were in the way when they ran and the cherry-petal goloshes felt warm and uncomfortable—and the little elves and the fairies had spent so much time hunting them up that they were afraid they were going to be late!

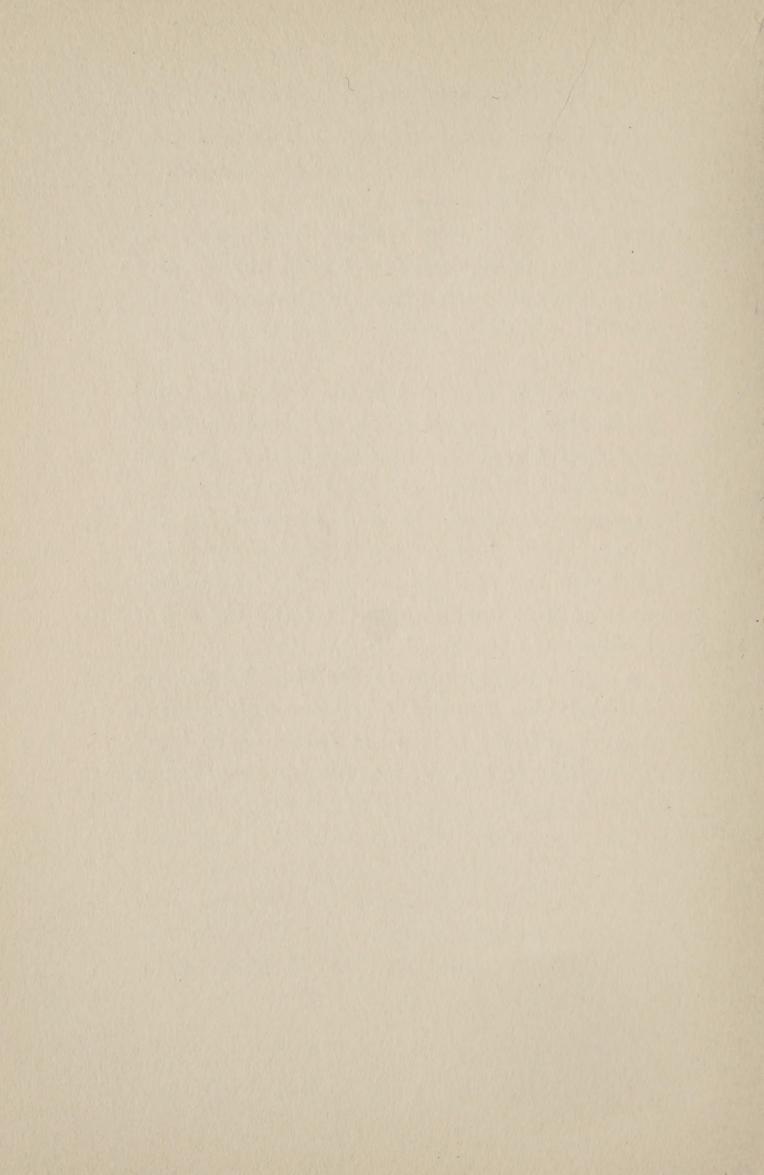
"Oh! umbrellas are such a nuisance," they cried, "but we have to carry them," they added, "because it is surely going to rain. The sun is all hidden in the sky."

At these words, the big round sun, hidden behind the clouds, chuckled. "Ha-ha," he laughed and he thrust his smiling face through them and winked at the little elves and fairies running toward the Goblin School cumbered with umbrellas and goloshes. "April fool!" he cried. "Didn't I fool you all splendidly—it isn't going to be a rainy day at all!"

Now the reason that April is such a sunshiny, showery month is that the old sun is never tired of playing over and over again that same old April joke. Why, he thinks it so funny that he has never yet been able to give up playing it, even after the first day of the month!

Just as the bluebird finished the last word of the story, the rain came. It sent the bluebird flying to shelter that was better than the limb of the little tree and the Little Girl picked up her doll hurriedly and scurried for the house. "It's just an old joke," she panted, when she had reached the porch. "The bluebird ought to have known. I think the sun is coming out now—yes! See!"

Far away—perhaps in the bluebird field, a bluebird was singing after the rain of the shower. Maybe it was the Little Girl's bluebird calling to her. It was too far away for us to catch the full meaning of his song.



The Fountain Goldfish

We were watching the goldfish that the Little Girl had put in the garden fountain when the bluebird came next day. The fish was shy of coming to the surface, though the Little Girl coaxed and coaxed. When the bluebird came, the Little Girl told him about it. "Why doesn't he come, bluebird?" she asked.

And in answer, the bluebird told the story. It was about the first fountain goldfish long, long ago—the fish who thought himself so splendid, just because—ah, well, the bluebird told the story, and here it is.

The Fountain Goldfish

NCE upon a time, there was a goldfish who lived by himself in a garden fountain. He swam hither and thither among the shells and water-plants. All day long he swam hither and thither, now slowly, now darting from spot to spot like a streak of red gold. Always, as he glided through the clear, cool water, he thought only of the color of his scales and how very beautiful they were.

One day, while he was thus occupied, a shadow fell across the sunlit water of the fountain where the goldfish was lazily waving his fins far down close to the sand and pebbles of the basin. He looked up to see a little boy standing by the rim of the fountain gazing down at him. "Ah," said the goldfish to himself, "I am being ADMIRED—how lovely I am! I will swim up to the top of the water so that the little boy may see me better! I will listen and hear what he says!"

So the goldfish darted to the edge of the water. He stared at the little boy and opened wide his fishy mouth for he had the grace to feel foolish, trying to show himself off! He turned from side to side waving his golden tail and while he did so, he opened his wide fishy eyes and his wide fishy mouth and listened to hear what the little boy would say about him.

"I don't think you're pretty at all," said the little boy—"no, not at all! You're making foolish faces and trying to show off."

The goldfish has been thinking of this ever since. It is what makes him so afraid of coming to the water's edge now when you and I look into the fountain to see him.

"He doesn't want to show off any more," the Little Girl concluded. "The story sounds as if it were true—I think the bluebird must have known."

And, after the bluebird flew away—after his story was told, the Little Girl went to look at the fountain goldfish again. It was true that he would never come close to the top of the water to stay long enough to be admired.

The Two Birds and the Early Worm

Next day, in the morning, the bluebird reached the garden first. He was waiting, impatient to tell his story to the Little Girl. It was about the old proverb of the Early Bird.

The Two Birds and the Early Worm

NCE upon a time on a spring morning, very early, two robins went out to walk in the garden, for they agreed to find the Early Worm and share it for breakfast. The sun had scarcely risen over the garden lawn but the Early Worm was already crawling across the garden walk. They had no difficulty at all in locating it. They both saw it at the same instant. One robin grabbed one end of the Early Worm and the other, the other—so far so well but that is not all the story.

"Now," said the first robin. "We will divide the Early Worm. I saw it first, so I

should have the larger part."

"No," said the other bird. "It was I who saw it, so I should have the larger part.

While they were disputing they lost their hold on the Early Worm, and it wiggled away

as fast as it could and hid in a hole before either robin could get it.

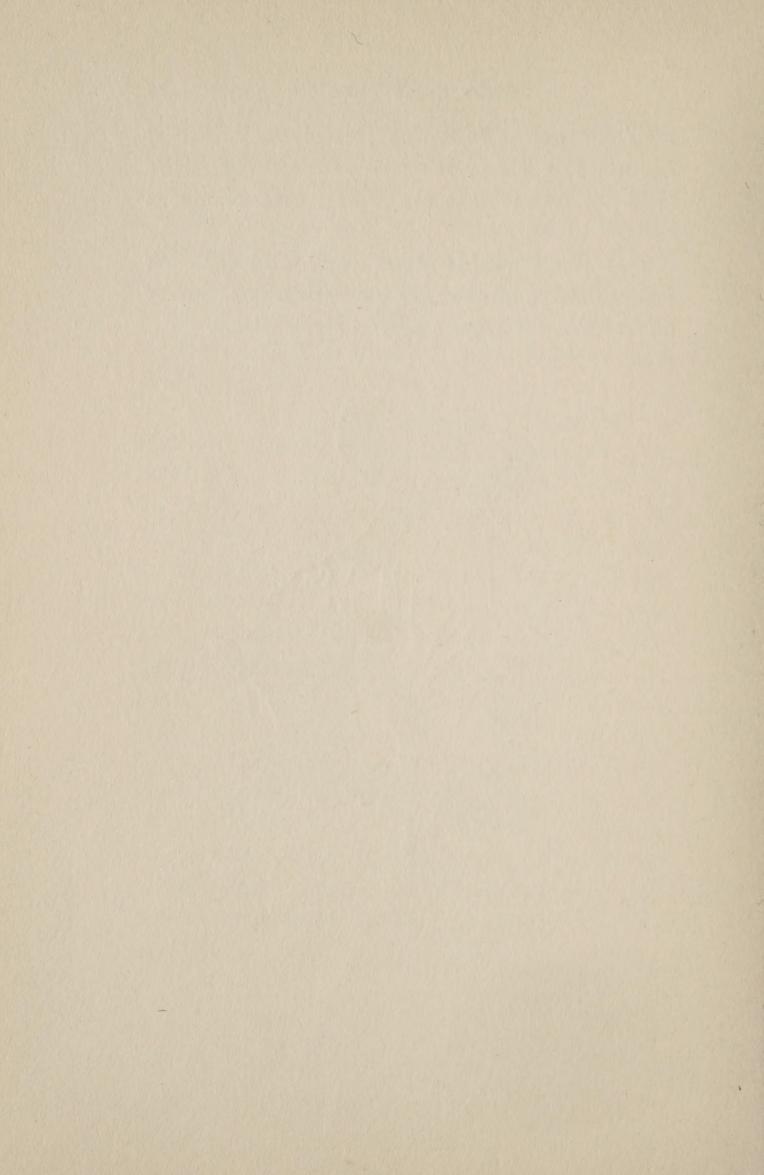
So neither robin had any breakfast that morning for, as everyone knows, there is only one Early Worm to be found on a spring morning at sunrise. If they had but agreed to share and share alike, all would have gone well—but that is what happens to those who are over greedy, sometimes.

Ever since that day garden worms have a way of stretching out quite wonderfullymuch longer than they really look. That is because they are the descendants of the Early Worm who was pulled so hard at either end by the robins. Perhaps, if the Early Worm had not escaped, we should not have had any worms nowadays in our gardens. Yes, the Early Worm was the ancestor of them all; just as the Early Bird, we hear so much about, is the great, great grandson of the two robins. He hunts for worms on the garden lawn, alone, at daybreak on a spring morning. In my opinion he is a selfish bird, like the first two robins—for all that he puts a premium on early rising. If you have watched him you know that he never fails to eat all of the worm himself.

"I am going to watch to-morrow to see if I can see an Early Worm," laughed the Little Girl. "And why is the Early Bird always a robin?"

But the bluebird flew away and left the Little Girl to answer her own questions. After all, it was not a part of the story at all.





Little Lady-Bug Lady

A little lady-bug had flown upon the Little Girl's hand and she was gazing at it, afraid to hurt it in brushing it away, when the bluebird lit on the little tree next day. That, perhaps, is why he chose to tell this story about the Little Lady-Bug of the garden.

XV Little Lady-Bug Lady

HERE was once upon a time when all the insects of the garden met together to talk. Each one boasted of what it could do.

"I can build," said the ant.

"I can make honey," said the bee.

"I can burrow," said the worm.

"I can sting," said the spider.

"I can sting, too," the bee declared. "But I sting only when interfered with in my work."

"I sting, too," declared the wasp. "I sting because I make others fear me with my sting! There is no person who will willingly touch a wasp. I have made myself feared and so I am safe from harm that man can do me!"

And so they each began to tell how they could hurt man, by sting or by bite. And the worm, who came near being laughed at because he seemed so defenseless, said that, in case of need, he had a secret means of self pro-

tection: he could either wiggle into the ground or make himself so homely that anybody would drop him.

But among the insects there was only one who boasted of nothing and that was the little round lady-bug with dotted wings. When they asked her what she would do, if some-body caught her, she said, "I think I should be polite!" They lost all patience with her and said, when she was caught some day she would find out the good of a sting or a bite—yes, she would!

And so time passed.

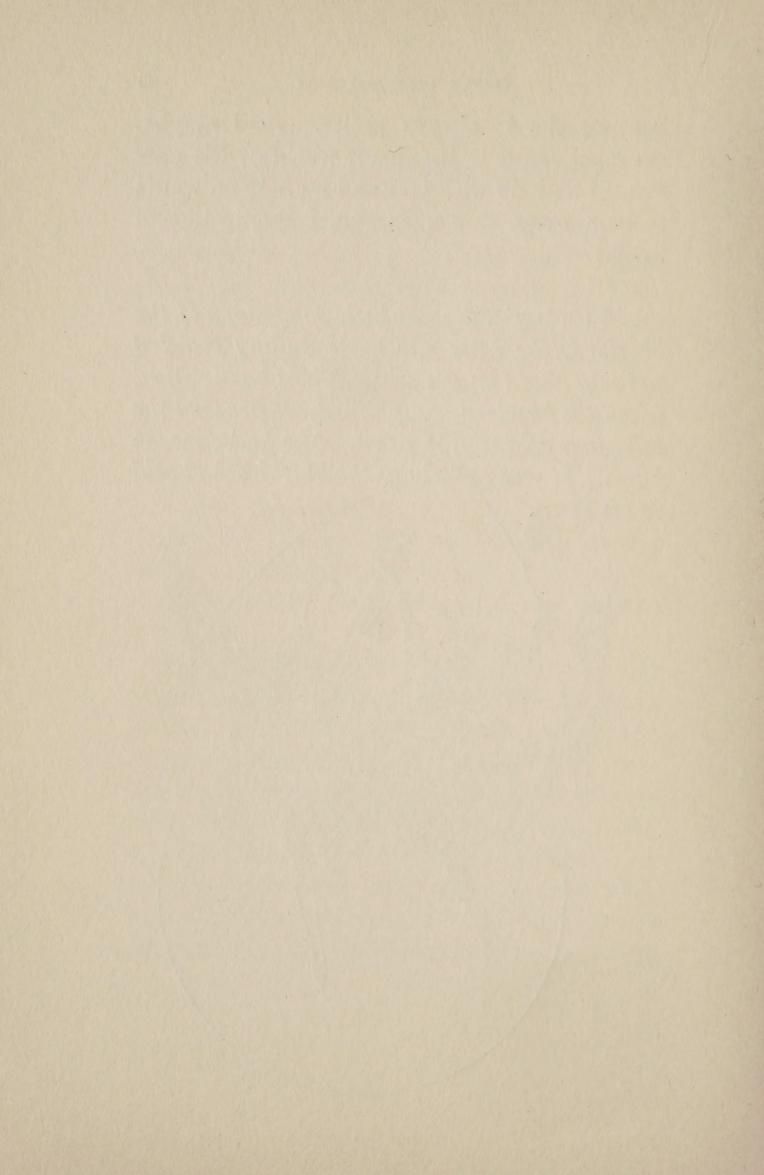
One day the ant who was crossing over a man's hand as he climbed a tree, stung him to protect herself. And nobody heard of the ant after that.

One day the bee, who was interfered with while at work—he stung a man, and his sting availed him nothing. It was so with the spider, and the hornet, and the mosquito. They were killed with a slap. But the little spotted lady-bug lived on. When she flew upon a hand, it left her alone. Nobody ever hurt her. If she flies upon your book while you are reading, you slip your finger under her and lift her off carefully. Nobody ever hurts a lady-bug

because she is always polite. And maybe, manners count in the insect world of the garden, as they do with you and me. Who wants to be a wasp, or a mosquito, I should like to know!

All through the short little song-story of the bluebird, the little spotted lady-bug crawled politely about on the Little Girl's hand. And when the bluebird had finished, we brushed the lady-bug off into the grass. She had done no harm. It was exactly as the bluebird had said





The White Pebble

The bluebird came as early as he could the next day. The Little Girl heard him singing even while she was being bundled into her soft white sweater. The air was crisp, for it was late September. She was glad that the bluebird was not yet gone away. She was sure she would miss his stories when he flew away in the fall. She could hardly wait to have the sweater buttoned, so anxious was she to see the bluebird of the garden, who was singing his own songs of what the flowers, and the sunlight, the wind, and the leaves had told him. And this time, he told about a white pebble—maybe you, too, have seen white pebbles on the garden walk?

XVI The White Pebble

NCE upon a time there was a princess who was going to have a birthday party. The king and the queen had sent out a great many invitations. The princess was to have the largest birthday cake anyone had ever seen. It was to be covered with pink icing, and it was to have seven pink candles on each slice.

Everyone was talking of the party. "What are you going to wear?" they asked. "What are you going to carry for a present?"

"I suppose we must take her a birthday present," they sighed, "but it is foolish to take the princess anything. She has more now than she knows what to do with—why, she has everything!" However, they went on buying boxes of candy, flowers, dressed dolls, picture books, games, boxes of letter-paper, hair ribbons, handkerchiefs, folderols, and gloves. Everyone tried to spend as much or as little money as possible to make the gifts seem great.

There was one guest who had no money with which to buy a present and that was a little brown elf. He did not think about what he should wear to the princess's party. All he thought was, "Oh, what can I give the dear princess? I want to give her something, so much! I want to give her the loveliest thing in all the wide, wide world—and I have no money! I don't want to go empty handed."

He thought, and he thought. "Perhaps I could earn some money," he said. "I will try."

So when Mr. Bee of the garden came a-buzzing by, the little brown elf called out, "Hoo-oo! Mr. Bee!—Hoo-oo! I'll go very fast to all your flowers for you and I'll get the honey, if you will let me. Then you can take a rest!"

Mr. Bee looked rather surprised.

"I just want enough money to buy the princess a birthday present," the little brown elf started to explain—but Mr. Busy Bee had buzzed busily by and paid no attention! Mr. Busy Bee was not used to being spoken to when he was so busy! He was not used to sitting down to rest. He never thought of anything but work. Why, it is even to be doubted whether he knew that the princess was

to have a party. Certainly he took no time to consider it.

So the little brown elf walked on. Presently, he came to Mrs. Lilly-flower's garden patch. It was looking rather dry. "Oh, Mrs. Lilly-flower," said the little brown elf, "I will draw you bucketsful of dew this evening if you will just give me a bit of your gold! I want to buy a present for the princess."

But Mrs. Lilly-flower shook her head. "I'm sorry," she said, "but I'm sure it is going to rain soon."

So the little brown elf walked on. It was the same everywhere. He ran from one place to another. He tried everything that he could think of, but no one wanted an errand boy or a general helper.

The time passed quickly. By and by the very day of the party arrived. Everyone was beautifully dressed; everyone had presents wrapped up in tissue paper and tied with gay ribbons; but there was one person who had nothing, and that was the little brown elf.

"What can I carry to the princess? What, oh! what can I carry to the princess for a birth-day present?" the little brown elf asked himself sadly.

He had nothing of his own—nothing at all of his own to give. He would not let himself grow discouraged, even in the face of great difficulty. "I will go and seek about in the woods and fields," he decided. "There are always lovely treasures to be picked up, if one can but find them there."

So he set forth.

He had not gone very far when he saw a dainty bird's nest swinging in a tree. "Oh," thought he, "surely no one will carry such a pretty thing as this to the princess! How she would like to see it!" Yet the nest belonged to a little gray bird and the little brown elf did not take it. It was not his to take. He never so much as thought of disturbing the four speckled eggs that lay there so cosily.

He went on his way, and whistled to keep himself merry.

Presently, he came to a strawberry patch. In it were large juicy berries. "Oh, how I should like to gather some for the princess," thought the little brown elf—but he hurried on and whistled to keep up his courage. "I am afraid that I have nothing and that I can find nothing to give the princess," he sighed. While he sighed, he rubbed his eyes. When

he rubbed his eyes, he stubbed his toe! Down in the dust went the little brown elf—all in a little brown heap!

But he picked himself up and dusted his clothes. Then he looked down to see what had made him stumble. There, lying in the path was a round, white pebble. It was so white and so round that the little brown elf picked it up at once. Indeed, it was a lovely smooth stone, and it would have gone happily into the little elf's pocket as a treasure of his very own, had he not thought at once, "Why, this is pretty enough to give to the princess!"

Now he whistled because he was truly happy. He began to polish his pebble till its smooth, white surface shone. With the pebble in his hand, he set forth to the birthday party.

When at last he reached the palace he found that everyone was beautifully dressed. Everyone carried packages wrapped up in tissue paper and tied with ribbons. In the packages were wonderful birthday presents—candy, flowers, dolls, picture books, games, boxes of letter paper, hair ribbons, handkerchiefs, and gloves.

But the little brown elf went with the rest. He held the white pebble fast in his hand. It was not tied up in tissue paper and there was no gay ribbon on it.

Everyone pushed and tried to be first, but the little brown elf waited patiently for his turn at the end of the line. The princess had been wished "Happy Birthday" many, many times before it came the little brown elf's turn. She had opened all the wonderful parcels, wrapped in tissue paper, and had seen all the big boxes of candy, the lovely ribbons, the beautiful dolls that could open and shut their eyes, the lacy be-ribboned folderols. She had looked at the fine picture books, and the jolly games. She had admired the letter-paper in its pretty boxes. She had admired the dainty handkerchiefs and the handsome gloves. She was very tired.

When she saw the little brown elf at the end of the line, she looked at him with friendly eyes. "Have you a present, too?" she asked.

He nodded. "I wish that it was ever so much more than it is," he explained. "It is only a white pebble but I think it is beautiful."

Then the little brown elf presented his gift. The princess smiled. "Oh, Oh!" she exclaimed, "how lovely! How wonderful!" She

danced about and clapped her hands. Everyone came running to see what the princess's last birthday gift might be—it seemed to please her more than anything else she had received!

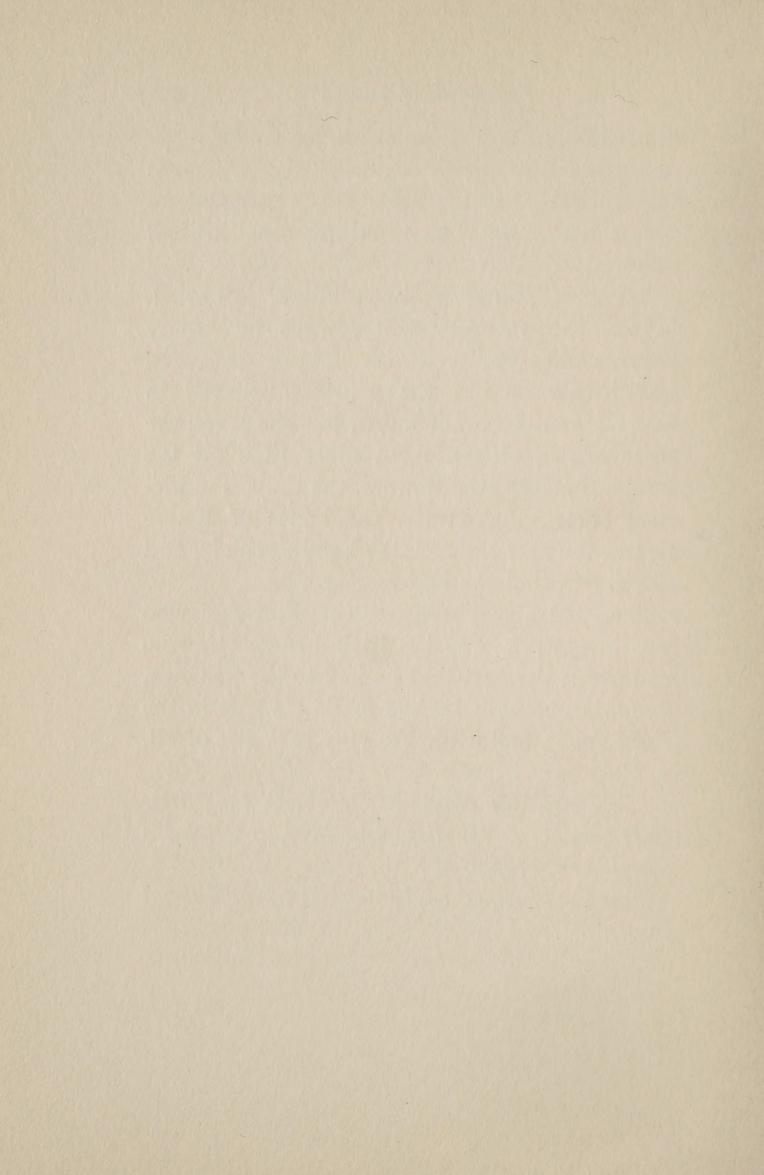
"A lucky stone! A lucky stone!" all cried. "Now, the princess will always be happy forever and ever!"

Whether or not the princess believed in lucky stones I do not know, but she loved the little brown elf's present more than all the boxes of candy, the flowers, the dolls, the picture books, the games, the boxes of letter-paper, the hair ribbons, the handkerchiefs, and the gloves that she had received.

And there was someone else that day who was happy; it was the little brown elf, who had given the best that he had to the princess, and who, because he had made his gift in the right spirit, had made the very best gift of all.

"My birthday comes in October," the Little Girl laughed. "Will you be here to tell me a story then, bluebird?"

But the bluebird could not tell for he did not know.



How There Came to be a Firefly

The rain kept the Little Girl in the house next day, and the next, and the next. She did not see the bluebird except for an instant one morning when he lit on the rosebush near the window. When, at last a clear sunny day had come and the grass under the little tree was dried by the wind and sun, the Little Girl brought her wooly white dog with her and waited beneath the tree for the bluebird to come and tell his story. The wooly white dog was just a toy and his eyes flashed when one pressed a little bulb in his head. If it had been dark, you might have taken the flashes for a firefly-who knows? There are no fireflies in late September. But the bluebird's story was all about fireflies. How did he know what the Little Girl had been thinking!



XVII How There Came to be a Firefly

HERE was once upon a time when the firefly carried no light. That was so long ago that it is almost forgotten. Listen and I will tell you the story of how the firefly got its light. It happened because the firefly loved the stars.

Every night, after the little gray owl came to perch on a limb of the old apple-tree in the garden—after the twilight had deepened into dusk, the firefly who had no light flitted hither and thither in the darkness watching the stars.

Some flashed with red and some flashed with green but the firefly loved best those that flashed with yellow. And one night when he was watching the stars a little light fell on him from the largest and most beautiful star in the sky. Ever since that time, long, long ago, the firefly has kept his little star-light a-twinkling in the garden. If you catch a firefly and look

for his light, you will see only a dark little insect because the light that the star gave him is very precious and he holds his black coat over it to hide it. Everyone who comes into the garden loves the fireflies. They are the stars of the grass and the trees, as the stars of the sky are fireflies of other gardens, the gardens of the clouds and the moon.

It was a short story—but, no doubt, the bluebird had other things to do that morning. It left the Little Girl wondering where the fireflies went after summer was passed. Can you tell?

She could not ask the bluebird. He had flown away.

The Flower that Lives Above the Clouds

The story that the bluebird sang next time was not about garden flowers. It was about the little white edelweiss that grows high up on the mountains. It must have been a story that the wind told the bluebird—else how could he ever have known?

The Flower that Lives Above the Clouds

ONG ago, long ago when the flowers first woke to life on this dear earth, each chose where it would live as it chose, too, the color of its petals.

"I will cover the ground and make the bare soil gay with green blades," cried the grass.

"I will live in the fields and by roadsides,"

laughed the daisy.

"I, too," echoed the buttercup, the cornflower, the poppy, and the clover.

"Give me the ponds and the lakes," the

water-lily called.

"And let us have the streams and the marshes," begged the irises, cowslips, and Jacks-in-the-pulpit.

"We love the shaded, ferny woodland spots," lisped the shy forget-me-nots and

wood-violets.

"And we wish to be petted in gardens," declared the rose, the pansies, the sweet William, the hollyhocks.

"I love the warm dry sun—I will go to the sandy desert," said the cactus. So all places except the bare ridges of high mountains were chosen. To these, no flower wished to go.

"There is not enough food there!" the daisy

explained.

"There is not enough warmth! There is not enough food!" all decided. "It is so bare and chilly! Let the gray moss go and cover the rocks," they said.

But the moss was loth to go.

"When one cannot live without moisture, warmth, nourishment—when one must have petting or live in a garden, surely the bleak places of the mountains must do without flowers! How foolish it would be to try to make the ragged bare mountain-tops lovely! Let the gray moss go—he has not yet chosen!"

So the gray moss went up the high mountains because he was told to go. He climbed over the bare rocks beyond the places where forests ceased to grow. All was desolate and silent up there.

Up higher and higher crept the gray moss.

It went even above the clouds where the ragged rocks were covered with ice and snow.

There it stopped short in amazement, for it found a quiet star-shaped flower clinging to the crags and blossoming! It was white like the snow around it and its heart was of soft yellow. So cold was it up there that the little flower had cased its leaves in soft wool to keep warm and living in the bleakness.

"Oh!" cried the gray moss, stopping short. "How came you here where there was no warmth, no moisture, no nourishment? It is high above the forests, high above the clouds! I came because I was sent. Who are you?"

Then the little starry flower nodded in the chill wind. "I am the edelweiss," it said. "I came here quietly because there was need of me, that some blossom might brighten these solitudes."

"And didn't they tell you to come?"

"No," said the little flower. "It was because the mountains needed me. There are no flowers up here but me."

The edelweiss is closer to the stars than the daisy, the buttercup, the iris, or the rose. Those who have courage, like it, have found it high above the clouds, where it grows ever

gladly. They call it Noble White—that is its name, edelweiss! Love, like the edelweiss, knows not self sacrifice.

The story about the Flower That Lives in the Clouds left the Little Girl thinking. She was sure there was a meaning in it. The bluebird did not tell her what it was. Perhaps he felt that she could think it out for herself.



The Mountain that Wanted to be a Man

And the next story that the bluebird told was a story about the mountains, too. Yes, it, too, was a legend that the wind had told. It was about the mountain that wanted to be a man.

The Mountain that Wanted to be a Man

NCE upon a time there lived a mountain that wanted to be like a man. The mountain was very tall. Its summit reached even above the clouds, sometimes. Its sides were covered with strong rocks and beautiful forests. Thick underbrush grew in the shade of staunch hemlock trees and mingled with lacy ferns and red wintergreen berries, hidden in the dimness of the mountain's woody places.

Close to the side of the mountain, in a narrow pass between it and the other hills, lay a tiny lake that was like a jeweled mirror of the blue sky above. The mountain could see itself reflected in the quiet water of this tiny lake, and its leafy forest trees grew low branches that swept the soft ripples of the lake.

Sometimes, when the wind blew and the clouds clung low, the mountain could not see

its reflection in the lake. These were the times when the storm wind drew through the notch, like a shepherd driving his flock before him—the clouds that brought the rain. At these times, the storm and the mountain talked together, and they talked of many things.

One day when the storm came, driving his flock before him, the mountain questioned him, "Have you ever known of a mountain that was like a man? I would like to be a manmountain. Can it be done?"

The storm sighed through the tree-tops. "No," he answered. "I have never yet heard of a mountain that was a man, and I go about the world, from east to west and from north to south. I see all things. I have seen the sea shape great rocks into strange shapes, and I, myself have chiseled hillsides and cliffs. I have never seen a mountain that was like a man, but I have seen other strange sights."

"I would that I had power like yours," brooded the mountain. "Then would I carve out the jagged crags on my wooded sides and make me into the semblance of a man."

Then the storm laughed aloud. "I scarce thought of this," he declared. "Indeed, I have power. It is I who drive the clouds before

me through the notch. It is I who move the wind. I sway great trees and send their giant limbs crashing down upon the ferns and moss like tiny twigs. I hurl heavy boulders as if they were pebbles, and I cause streams to flow like torrents. My sword is the lightning and my voice is the law of forest thunder. Even thou, Mountain, thou must bend to my power. I will shape thee into the semblance of a man!"

So the storm said to the mountain and his strong great voice reverberated in the crash of deep thunder as he moved the wind and flashed the lightning.

All night long the storm struggled at his work. Never before had there been such fierce flashes of his sword. Never before had he uprooted so tall hemlocks! The giant trees quaked and crashed on the mountain side. Under the stress of the storm the mountain itself quivered, even to its broad base in the valley.

Then, when the storm had done all that it could, it passed a soft breeze over the mountain and caused it to fall into deep and tranquil sleep in the midst of white clouds.

When the morning sun rose in the wide sky, it swept away the mists. The mountain woke

in the clear sunlight. Its tiny lake lay calm below and as the mountain gazed down upon it, it saw the reflection of a great stone face upon its summit, the face of a strong mangiant that the storm had carved from the mountain's bowlders.

Many people go to see the mountain now. They stand by the shore of the little blue lake and gaze upward at the face on the mountain side. And the man-mountain gazes down upon them. When they call across the lake, the echo that wakes to their halloo! seems the very voice of the man-mountain answering.

"I think," said the Little Girl, "I'd like to see the man-mountain. Maybe, when my birthday has come and gone—when I am quite grown-up and can go where I want to go outside the garden, I, too, will see the man-mountain and then I will tell him that the bluebird told me his story and that the wind told HIM.

The Sundial and the Dandelion

It was a late dandelion that the Little Girl had found in a close sheltered nook, that she held up for the bluebird to see. He twitched his tail gaily, but he knew—none better—that autumn is not spring! And when he had cleared his throat of the surplus gaiety, he sang the song that is the story of the dandelion.



The Sundial and the Dandelion

In the centre of a garden, there was a bronze sundial. It thought itself very wise and it looked down on the flowers in the garden-beds with contempt. "They bloom one day and are gone the next," it said to itself. "I count the time of a century."

Yes: the sundial was wise. It could mark off the hours of the day quite easily. It could read the language of the sun and that is something that nothing else in the garden could do. Also, it was very useful; for every day when it was pleasant, a princess came to look at it, to find out what time it might chance to be. She, too, marveled that the sundial could read the language of the sun and write it with a shadow.

Now, down in the thick grass, quite hidden from the gardener's keen eye, there grew a tiny dandelion plant. It had come up from a little winged seed and already it had a green dandelion bud upon it. The dandelion was quite beneath the notice of the grand sundial, but the little weed looked up to it and marveled. The dandelion loved the sun too, and when its green bud opened, the flower within was a yellow gold ball like it. "Would that I might tell time, too," the dandelion wished. "I, too, would count the years, if I could." And so it grew.

One day, the sun did not shine in the garden, for the clouds were over the sky. That day, when the princess came, the face of the sundial was a blank.

Then the princess looked down at the grass and her gaze rested upon the cluster of seeds that were grown from the dandelion's yellow-gold flower. "Tell me what o'clock it is, little flower," she laughed. "The sundial is not so wise to-day as it might be." And she blew a breath that parted the white globe of the winged dandelion seeds that had been the flower once. They flew north, and south, and east, and west. There were only three left. "Then it is three o'clock, little flower, is it not? Truly you tell time well—even better than the sundial, on a cloudy day."

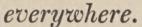
The sundial looked down to where the dandelion plant had been and it wondered if this were true indeed. It waited to find out.

Next year, and next year, and next year, there were always new yellow-gold dandelions in the grass, and, no doubt because the princess had told them about the dandelion's simple wisdom, the children came to pick white dandelion seeds and blow their white globes to find out what o'clock it might be. They could not read the sundial and the dandelion seemed meant for them.

You, too, may tell time by the dandelion if you blow its seeds north, south, east, and west. The seeds that remain will be the hour of the day, but those that have been blown are the centuries still to come. The sundial cannot tell time this way. Ever, and ever, and ever there will be new centuries, even as there are new dandelions springing from last year's winged seeds, but the bronze sundial lasts with its wisdom only for the span of one man's life.

Despise not the little things. The dandelion in its simplicity is greater than the wise sundial of the garden.

When the dandelion's story was finished, the bluebird flew away from the little tree and the Little Girl searched vainly for dandelion puffs to tell her the time of day. They had long since gone to seed—winged seed that next year should grow into new golden dandelions





The Legend of the Morning Dew

The bluebird came on time! He was there on his branch when the Little Girl ran up the path of the garden from the red and white flower-bed where she had been gathering buds.

The bluebird looked knowingly at the flowers she let drop—and maybe he told the story with a purpose. It was called the Story

of the Morning Dew.

XXI The Legend of the Morning Dew

ERHAPS you never knew it, but it is true nevertheless: for every little flower that grows, there is a fairy who tends it in the garden. It is the fairy who unfolds the bud. It is the fairy who closes the petals at night. It is the fairy, too, who takes care of the flower's seed and finally gives it to the wind to carry where it thinks best. Now that you know this, I will tell you how there came to be dew. It is not a long story.

Once upon a time, long, long ago, there were some children who lived near a garden. They did not know what I have told you about the flowers. They thought nothing about picking them. They even picked the blossoms and left them to wilt, for they knew no better. It is a cruel thing to do that.

Yes, the children would let the flowers fall on the garden paths to wilt. That was when they picked merely to see who could get the largest bunch and in their hurry they tore the flowers up by the roots.

At night the fairies came to take care of their blossoms and they found them gone. When you see the dew in the garden, it is the tears of the fairies who have cried over every flower that has been picked thoughtlessly and left to wilt. Always, when this happens, the fairies have to find new flowers to tend. So think twice before you break one off its stem, and never, never be so thoughtless and unkind as to drag up a whole plant by the roots. When you do this, it is plainly unkind. No more flowers will grow from that plant and what will the fairies do, do you think, if there are no more flowers?

When the story was finished, the Little Girl thoughtfully gathered the buds she had picked. She had never before realized that the flowers were the homes of fairies. After the bluebird's story she would think twice before picking a flower simply because she wanted it for the moment.

How There Came to be a Katydid

It was always quiet in the garden. There was only the sound of the breeze that fanned the leaves of the bluebird's little tree. But as the summer had grown into autumn, there were hundreds of chanting insect voices that sung in the secret places beneath the gardengrass and under the leaves of the flowers. The bluebird evidently heard them, just as the Little Girl had heard them. When he came to swing upon his tree next day, he told a story all about the garden voices. It is an old, old story—as old as the clouds, and the wind, and the sunlight. It is How There Came To Be a Katydid.

How There Came to be a Katydid

ONG, long, long ago—so long ago that this story has had time to grow into a garden legend—two green grasshoppers went out, one fine day, to play with a cricket. They played tag and I'm-on-gypsyland. At last they decided to have a game of hide-and-seek.

The goal was a blade of grass and they counted out to see who should be goalman. It fell to the little cricket, Katy. She was to hide her eyes behind the grassblade and count up to one hundred by tens while the two grass-hoppers went off to hide.

So the cricket hid her face so that she could not see and began: "Ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, sixty, seventy, eighty, ninety,—one hundred! Coming!"

Though there were plenty of good places in which to hide in the garden, one green grass-

hopper had been slow to suit himself. He had not yet hidden when the little cricket turned about and caught him.

And he began, "You didn't count up to a hundred! I didn't have time to hide! You should have hollered, 'Coming!' It's no fair! I'm not going to play any more—you didn't count up to a hundred!"

At this, the other grasshopper came out of hiding. "She did count up to a hundred," he said. "Katy did!"

"She didn't!"

"She did!"

"She didn't!"

"Katy did, did, did!"

"Katy didn't, didn't, didn't!"

"Did, did, did!"

"Didn't, didn't, didn't!"

"Katy did!"

"Katy didn't!"

"She did!"

"She didn't!"

"Katy did!"

"Katy didn't!"

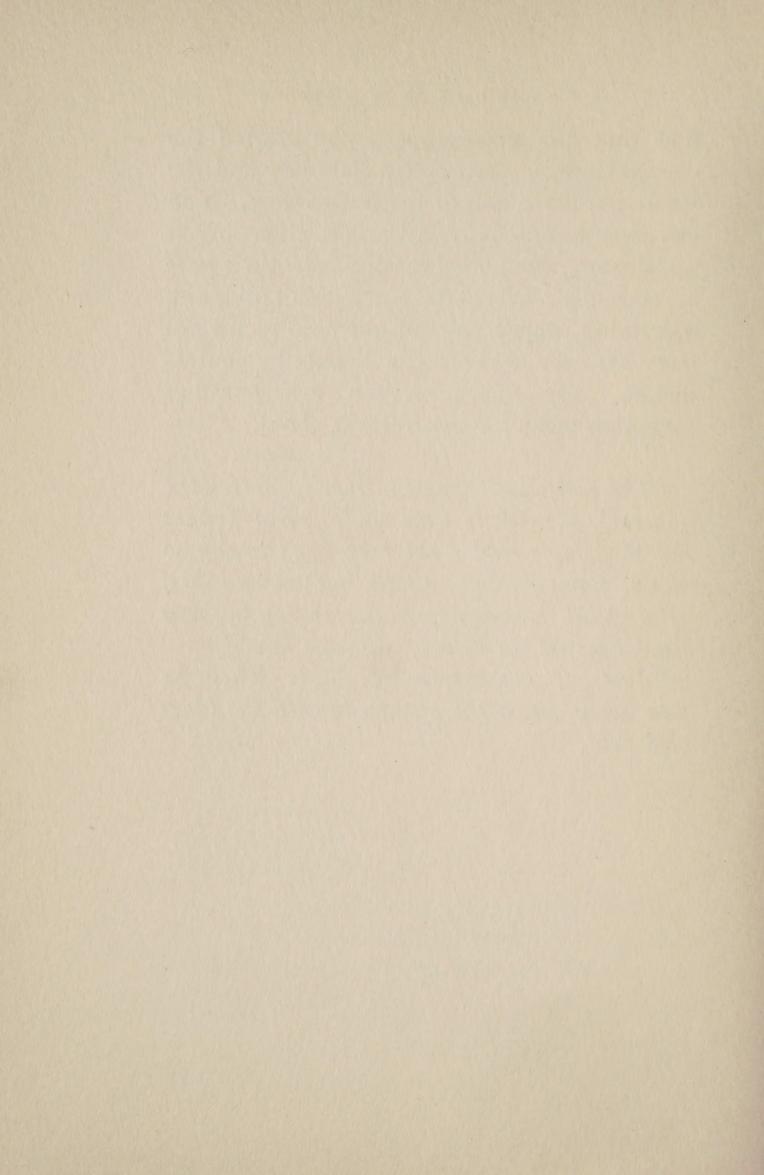
To this very, very day, you can hear the dispute still going on in the garden and the game of tag has never yet been finished. Ever since

that time the grasshoppers who started the discussion have been called katydids and the whole garden is full of the controversy. You can hear hundreds of little voices keeping it up, though nothing is ever decided. So it goes on eternally, Katy did-Katy didn't, did, did, did, didn't, didn't, she did, she didn't-for nobody has ever yet settled a dispute by contradiction. By this time, too, everyone has forgotten what the quarrel was about.

"The Katydids have long since forgotten the quarrel," the Little Girl said. "But I dare say they have said what they have to say so many, many summers that it has grown into a little chant. And, now they can say nothing else-because they have forgotten how!"

"Just so," the bluebird nodded. Then, he flew away across the garden toward the blue-

bird field.



At the End of the Rainbow

It may have been the nodding golden-glow that suggested the bluebird's next story—it may have been the little shower that came up suddenly to make a rainbow with the clear sunlight. Nobody knows. But when the Little Girl greeted the bluebird next day, he told her the story of the rainbow and what a fairy once did with the pot of gold that she found at its end upon a sloping hillside.



At the End of the Rainbow

OU have heard, I dare say, that there is a pot of gold at the end of every rainbow. That was true long, long ago for the sun himself buried it there. You shall hear the story. Now, the pot of gold is at everyone's own front door.

It happened when the first rainbow was painted in the sky by the rain and the sun that the sun suggested the fun of putting a pot of golden treasure for the one who could find it there. Far and wide the news spread to the elves and to the fairies, "At the end of the rainbow, there is a pot of gold!"

When the rainbows came in the sky, everyone would set out to find the pot of gold. They would start and travel toward the place where they saw the rainbow touch the earth, over field of grass, over field of stubble, over hill, over dale, over mountain crag and over valley beyond, across brook and across river; but by the time they had reached the spot where the rainbow touched the earth it had vanished and no one could find the pot of gold.

The fairies of the flowers tried it; the fairies of the trees tried it. The elves who live under stones and in hollow trees, they tried it, too. The rainbow seemed always far away. Its end was further off than anyone would have supposed. They wanted the magic gold for themselves, the hoard of the sun's treasure.

At last, there came a rainbow in the sky after a shower. It was one of the most wonderful rainbows that there ever was; for its colors were clear and beautiful. And a fairy slipped out from under a brown leaf where it had been hiding and saw the wide span of the rainbow arch against the sky. "I will go and find the treasure," she thought, and she started off in the direction where the rainbow touched the earth on a distant hillside. The fairy flew so swiftly that the rainbow was still a clear arch when she came to the hill where it touched and there, at the end, he found the treasure of magic gold in a golden kettle! Ah, that was treasure indeed!

Now, the treasure was large and the fairy might not fly back with it. She was forced to plod homeward as best she could, tugging the pot of gold.

As she went down the hillside, the grass cried out, "Oh, give me a little of the treasure—give me some of the sun's magic gold!" And the fairy tipped the pot of gold and spilled it upon the grass.

As she was going over the stubble-field, the earth called, "Give me, give me of the sun's magic gold!" And the fairy tipped the pot of gold and it fell upon the earth.

As she was going over mountain, and valley, over river, and stream, and brook, through woodland and back into her garden, the mountain, and the valley, the stream, and the river, and the brook, the woodland and the garden each begged for a bit of the treasure and each time, she tipped the pot of gold and left a part of it behind her.

When at last, she reached home, the pot of gold was much lighter than when she had started and there was a train of elves and fairies following on after her to pick up what bits might fall upon the way as the pot tipped. Indeed, the pot was so light that the gold was all gone from it when the fairy reached her own home again! The others ran off, each to

her own place, each with as much of the treasure as had been picked up as it fell. And now, if you go to see a hillside, you will find it all covered with golden flowers where the fairy tipped her pot of gold. The fields, and the woods, the rivers, and the brooks; the mountains, and the valleys, the gardens wherever there are yellow blooms, there is where the fairy, long ago tipped her pot of magic sungold of rainbow treasure! And the reason that many little flowers have such yellow hearts is that the elves and the fairies who lived in them carried their gleanings of the treasure and hid them, each in his own home.

And so, to-day, if you will but look in your own garden, you will know that a fairy once passed that way. The lawn is yellow with dandelions in spring and you might try to count the flowers that hold the magic gold!

"And that is the reason why the garden and the grass, all the year round are full of yellow flowers?" the Little Girl questioned. "The magic gold turned to flowers!"

The bluebird sung a ripple of song in answer—it was but a garden legend that he had told. Maybe he had it from the sunlight that flooded all the garden.

Why the Potato Lives in the Ground

"Tell me a funny story, Bluebird," the Little Girl begged, when she saw the bluebird on his tree next day. And perhaps there was a twinkle in the bluebird's little eye when he told the story of Why the Potato Lives Down in the Ground.

Why the Potato Lives in the Ground

HERE was once a time when the potato grew out in the sunlight, just as the squash and the pumpkin do now. That was so long ago that nobody remembers it, but I will tell you how it came to grow quite hidden in the earth.

As everybody knows, the potato has eyes. One morning he woke up and he found that nothing suited him, for he was cross. He looked at the lettuce and he said, "Oh, Lettuce, I think your curly leaves are too curly. Can't you make 'em straight!"

And the lettuce, who thought her curly leaves the prettiest that could be made, took a sudden and great dislike to the potato, even though she answered never a word.

When she answered never a word, the potato gave a sniff and turned to the egg-plant. "Mercy," said the potato, "I shouldn't think you'd like to have so brown a face! If you

knew how it looked you'd use a parasol." And the egg-plant who thought a thick coat of tan most becoming, took a sudden and strong dislike to the potato, even though she answered never a word.

When she answered never a word the potato gave a sniff and turned to the celery. "Oh, Celery," said the potato, "what makes you grow straight and lumped all in a bunch?" And the celery, who knew that it was best for her to grow lumped in a bunch—because she couldn't grow otherwise—took a sudden and strong dislike to the potato, though she answered never a word.

When it answered never a word, the potato gave a sniff and turned to the red pepper. "Oh, Red Pepper," said the potato, "why are you so fiery red? Why don't you stay green—" But it got no further! As everybody knows, the red pepper is peppery! "Keep your eyes in the ground, Potato!" it retorted. "If you don't bury your eyes in the ground where they can't see, something will happen!"

"Yes! Yes," chimed in the lettuce, the eggplant, and the celery, "The potato has too many eyes!" But the potato gave a sniff and turned to the onion. "Oh, Onion," said the potato, "what makes you so white? Why is your head so large and your body so small?—WHY—"

But right here, the onion who is and always has been a weepy vegetable, began to cry. He was very sensitive!

The garden vegetables decided that something must be done at once to stop the potato. So they called to the hobgoblins to come and help them.

The hobgoblins made short work of burying the potato in the earth where his eyes could see nothing. Only his leaves were permitted to stand in the sunlight. And the hobgoblins invented potato-bugs—hoards of them striped yellow and black. They set these to guard the potato and to eat him up if he so much as peeped above ground.

Since that time the potato sees nothing. Everything is peaceful and happy in the garden. Perhaps the potato might like to live above ground but he grows in the earth. Really, I think he deserved his fate. This is the story of why the potato grows in the ground. You may believe it or not, just as you choose—but one thing is certain: if you

make disagreeable personal remarks, like the potato when he woke up cross in the morning, everyone will take a sudden and strong dislike to you.

"I never before knew why there were potato-bugs," the Little Girl laughed. And when the bluebird flew away to his field, she was still smiling.



The Brier Rose—The Story of the Beginning

It was too late for roses—almost time for frosts, but the Little Girl, when she came from the bluebird field one day, brought with her a cluster of rose-haws with beautiful red-brown leaves about them. Maybe the bluebird himself saw her pick the rose-haws. She had gone to fill her brown pitcher at the spring. The whole field was so alive with bluebirds there that one could not tell which one the bluebird of the garden was. But when he came next time, he told the sweetest story of all—it was How There Came to be a Wild-Brier Rose, long, long ago when the earth was still very young.

XXV

The Brier Rose-The Story of the Beginning

beautiful? Listen, and I will tell you the story. It happened long ago when the first green plants grew and when the elm, and the oak, and the maple, and the poplar were baby trees. That was the time when everything was beginning to grow and all the grasses, and the weeds, and the flowers were small like little children.

At that time, long, long ago, a tiny green plant pushed its way through the dry stony earth out into the sunlight on a green hillside and it sprang up with its tender stalk side by side with rough weeds.

"Well, well," cried the weeds, "who are you, Little Growing Thing?—What are you going to be when you grow up? Are you going to be a weed like us?"

And the little plant looked at itself. "No,"

it said, "I am not going to be a weed. I am going to be something wonderful like the elm, and the oak. I am very small yet, but I want to grow so that I may reach the sky and hold the sun in my arms at dawn."

"Oh!" cried the weeds. "You! You can't be anything larger than a weed, such as we are! You have sprung up amongst us. If you are anything else, go away!" They pushed the little green plant rudely. They took its moisture and its sunlight, but the little green plant kept on growing, in spite of all obstacles, as well as it knew how, every day growing taller and more lovely.

Little thorns came—they were its troubles, you know—little thorns came upon its stems and pricked the tender new leaves and the little green bush was very unhappy sometimes—poor little green bush! It had only the sun and the sky which it loved.

But the little bush was never disheartened. It grew and grew each day as well as it knew how and put forth new leaves, trying ever to reach higher toward the sky.

When the sun rose in the misty pink clouds at the dawn, the little bush looked at it and wished that it might be like it, and wondered if it would ever be able to reach up so high. But it could not. It was only a little bush that was trying to grow as best it could.

Day by day passed by and the little bush knew that it could never be tall like the elm or the oak, but it still tried to do its duty every day and grow toward the sky as far as it could.

And one day, what do you think happened, Little One? This is what happened: the little green bush woke up with the dewy sunrise and held its delicate leaves out to the warmth—and then, and then it found a surprise! There were clusters of new green leaves all over its branches in tiny, tender bundles that clustered about something softly tipped with pink, and these were all little buds of flowers like nothing the little bush had ever known before.

And the little bush forgot its thorns, it forgot the sandy, stony ground; it forgot the rough weeds and in its surprise it unfolded, one by one, the pink-tipped buds.

Each tiny bud unfolded and opened with pink, heart-shaped petals, each the color of the misty, rose-tinted clouds of sunrise, each with a golden sun in its heart. And so, Little One, we grow always to be like what we love best. If we are rude and selfish as the weeds are, we do not try to grow toward the sky, and we never reflect in our hearts its warmth and beauty. When you see the brier rose blooming on the stony hillside of earth's great garden place, you must remember the story of how it tried to grow as best it could toward the sky.

The bluebird flitted away, after the story. The white and yellow butterflies floated over the flowers in the garden, silently. The sun shone in the clear blue sky and the white clouds at the horizon were very still. The Little Girl herself was quiet, thinking under the bluebird tree and looking up into the sky.

The Hole in the Hedge

It was but a short, little story that the bluebird told when he came after a long rainy day next time. The days were growing cooler, and the time was near when the bluebird would find another bluebird field, perhaps. He had told the Little Girl many stories, all during the time that he had known her, when he came each day to his garden to sing on the little tree. Maybe, when he should go away, it would be to find new stories, and to bring them back when he came back to the garden in the spring. Then, he should find the Little Girl there playing, and there would be more and more stories to tell her. Ah, when the bluebird should come again, there would be much to think about!



The Hole in the Hedge

HERE was once upon a time a garden hedge that was planted around a garden. It was a thick fine hedge as was ever planted and it grew green and splendid, to wall in the garden. Yet, one day, when the gardener came to clip it, he found a small hole, far down close to the ground.

"This will never do," the gardener thought. "This will spoil the hedge." But, try as he might, the hole in the hedge did not grow smaller.

"It is just a small hole," thought the little hedge,—"just a small hole," and it reasoned with itself that the birds needed the place to go through, though it knew quite well that they did not. It really did not want to take the extra pains to fill up that little hole. It preferred to grow tall and wide. And so the gardener, do what he might, found the little hole still in the garden hedge.

It grew larger—for the little animals that passed that way found it easy to slip through into the garden and out again. Even the children, after a while, found that it was an easy way into the garden, if one was in a hurry. And so the hole in the hedge grew, and grew, and grew!

"It makes the whole hedge ugly," the gardener declared. "I will take the hedge down and put up something more useful." And so he did. When one plants a hedge or builds a fence, one wants something that may be depended upon. For the duty of the garden hedge is to grow close and well—who wants a hedge that has a hole in it, I wonder?

The bluebird flew away when he had told his story and the Little Girl watched him go. She would have liked a longer story. Indeed, she would have liked to keep the bluebird still singing in the garden, if she could. He had learned so many stories about the garden things!

The Golden Purse and the Seeing Eyes

The Little Girl was afraid that the bluebird had gone away—he was so late in coming next day. But, at last he did come with his last story for the summer. It was time for the bluebirds of the bluebird field to flock away, and the bluebird of the Garden was one of them. He brought as his last story The Golden Purse and the Seeing Eyes. I think he had already given the Little Girl the best gift of the fairies for she had the Seeing Eyes, I am sure.

The Golden Purse and the Seeing Eyes

HERE was once upon a time a poor wood-cutter who had two sons. When he died he left them only a small hut on the edge of the forest. They had little enough to live upon, but, nevertheless, every night the younger son took his blue porridge bowl, in which he had purposely left half his supper, and he placed it on the door-stone for the elves.

The other, however, scraped his dish to the last drop. "This is what thrifty folk do," said he. "Some day I shall be rich."

Now the younger son went alone into the forest, one morning, to cut wood. He carried an apple and a bit of bread in his pocket. When he had done his work, he sat down to eat them.

While he was eating his bread he remembered that there was a fairy ring not far away.

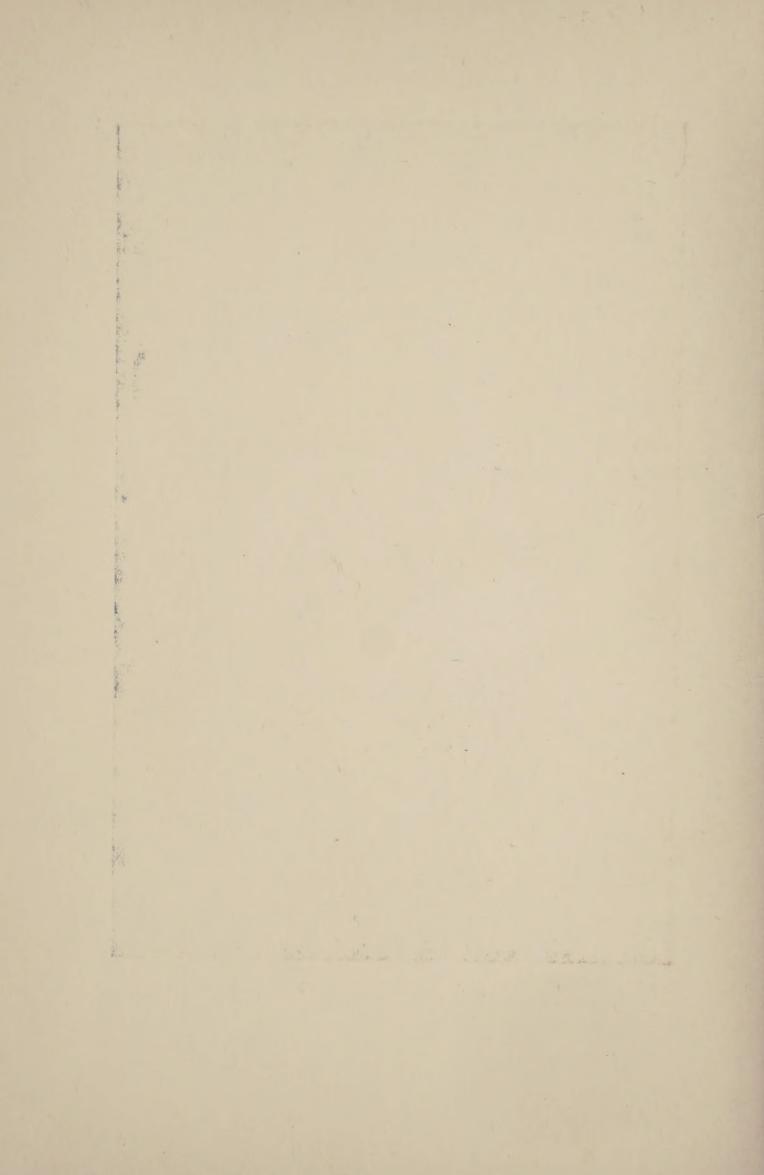
"Ah," laughed he to himself, "I have it! I will not eat my apple, but I will take it to the fairy ring and drop it there. It will make a fine feast for the Little People when they come to dance to-night." Then, because he had reached the fairy ring, he dropped the apple as he had planned.

Scarcely had he done this when a little wee man popped out of the fern. His coat was made of a cardinal flower and his eyes twinkled through ragged white locks, as the stars peep between silver clouds on a windy night. "Friend," he said, "the Little People thank you for your many gifts. One does not give a recompense for love, but the fairies themselves love you and they have sent you the best gift that they have. It is called the Seeing Eyes. It is an invisible gift, but it is worth more than wealth."

So the younger son thanked the little wee man and he hurried home through the forest to tell his brother all that had happened to him. All the way upon the path homeward he saw new wonders in the trees and flowers. It seemed, too, that he understood the song of the birds and the chant of the little brooks that he passed.



"Every evening he placed his blue porridge bowl on the doorstep] for the elves."



When he reached home he told his brother all that had happened. "What nonsense," declared the elder son. "Your eyes look to me just as they ever did! Why did you not make the opportunity to ask for a gift of value—one that could be seen? I would have taken nothing less than a purse of gold! Why did you not make the chance to ask for it?"

That night, when his brother set his bowl upon the doorstep, the elder brother put his out, also, for he decided to win the favor of the Little People, so that he, too, might have a gift.

Six nights, he placed his blue porridge bowl on the doorstone and on the morning of the seventh day, he went out into the woods toward the fairy ring, with an apple in his pocket.

"If the little wee man speaks to me," he determined, "I will take nothing that cannot be seen. I will ask him outright for the Purse of Gold." And then, because he had reached the fairy ring, he dropped the apple as he had planned.

Scarcely had he dropped it than it happened to him as it had to his brother. The little wee man popped out of the fern. His coat was

made of a cardinal flower and his bright eyes twinkled through his ragged white locks, as the stars peep between the silver clouds on a windy night. "Why did you drop the apple in our fairy ring?" he asked.

"It is my seventh gift to the Little People," replied the elder son. "In return for all that I have done, I ask for the Purse of Gold."

"So!" replied the little wee man, thoughtfully. "Well, I will give it you. It is really of little worth in the eyes of the fairies. Content and happiness do not go with it unless you know its secret. There are many things that gold cannot buy."

So he gave the elder brother the purse and, scarcely giving thanks, the elder brother grasped it and turned toward the city that lies beyond the wood. He could not wait to see what he could buy, and if I should tell you the half of his possessions after he had reached the city, you might envy him.

Nevertheless, it did not take him long to find out that there are many things money cannot buy. He had no love, for that may not be bought. He had no content, for he was always thinking of his possessions and seeking new ones. He had no happiness, because he had no content—and he had nothing but the things that money can buy. He was very unhappy. He thought of nobody but himself from morning till evening and he did no good with what he possessed.

As for the younger son, he lived on in the little hut on the edge of the forest. Though he had no money to give away, all poor people loved him. Wherever he went he carried the magic of the Seeing Eyes. All the fields, the woods, the streams, and the brooks were more truly his than his brother's, for he loved the grasses, and the flowers, and the trees, and the birds and understood them all. Surely, you need not ask if he was happy, for it is not everyone to whom is given the wealth of the Seeing Eyes.

And so the bluebird flew away. The Little Girl did not see him go. But he is singing somewhere and maybe—who knows—the Little Girl's bluebird may be in your very own garden. Perhaps, if you are playing there, you may hear him sing. The bluebird's garden is always a happy place, full of the sunlight and the flowers, and the soft breezes. It is a quiet garden full of thoughts.

Maybe, from the bluebird field nearby, the bluebird will come back to the Little Girl and his garden to tell her new stories when the wind, and the sunlight, and the flowers where he has flown have given them to him.



